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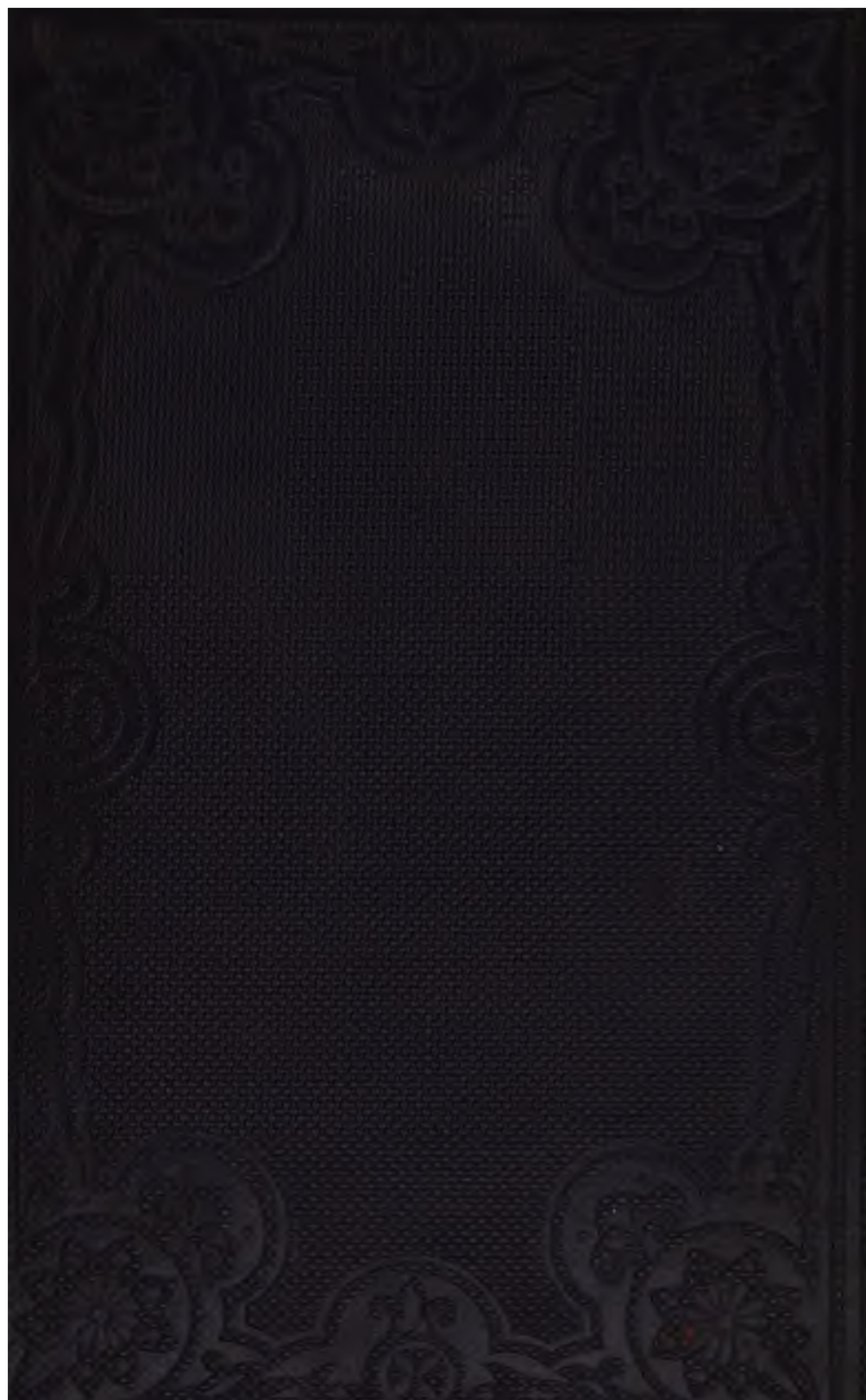
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# A MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

## REV. GEORGE ARMSTRONG,

FORMERLY INCUMBENT OF BANGOR IN THE DIOCESE OF DOWN, AND LATTERLY  
ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF LEWIN'S-MEAD CHAPEL, BRISTOL.

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNALS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

BY

ROBERT HENDERSON,

HIS LITERARY EXECUTOR.

"Vitam impendere vero."

LONDON:

EDWARD T. WHITFIELD, 178, STRAND.

1859.

210. a. 13.



HALKBY :  
PRINTED BY CHARLES GREEK.

TO  
FRANCES, RICHARD, WILHELMINA AND ROSE,

*This Memoir of their beloved Father,*

WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE ONE OF THE CHIEF SOURCES WHENCE THEY

WILL DERIVE

THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS MIND AND HEART

UPON SUBJECTS THEY WERE TOO YOUNG TO APPRECIATE WHILE HE WAS

ALIVE,

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



## PREFACE.

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THE Writer takes leave of this labour of love, and launches it on its uncertain destiny of success or failure with some misgivings as to his competency for a task which he was not at liberty to refuse to undertake. The First Part of the Memoir has, with little exception, already appeared in the *Christian Reformer*, where it was originally intended to appear entire, and be afterwards merely reprinted for wider distribution. But the accumulation and discovery of materials after it was begun in that publication, induced the writer to change his plan, and, agreeably to the wish of one whose wish in such a case was law, to determine on the publication of a longer account of the life of his lamented friend than was consistent with the pages of a monthly Magazine. This explanation will account for the First Part not being divided into Chapters, as it would otherwise have been, and an absence of uniformity in the treatment of the subject. The Work has been compiled amidst other and pressing engagements, which, with some further considerations, prevented its commencement anew, and the fusion of the materials discovered during its progress, in a more regular and elaborate form.

OATLANDS, WALTON-ON-THAMES,  
July, 1859.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE first impulse on losing a friend whose life was a source of delight and instruction to the circle admitted to his familiar intercourse, and also of wide and general usefulness in the great causes of truth, humanity and progress, is a wish not only to preserve his memory in one's own heart and mind, but to see some written record of what he was in the flesh, that others may share our love and admiration, sympathize with our sorrow at his loss, and mayhap profit by his example. For the world's benefactors are seldom so well appreciated while alive as when their loss has revealed their value, and the distance that separates us from them allows us more dispassionately to weigh their merits, estimate their struggles and appreciate their position in the times and generation in which they lived.

And with the desire to preserve the memory of those we loved, and whose lives and acts were public enough to excite curiosity and criticism, there mingles another wish—that they should not be misunderstood, that the motives we knew to be so pure should shine in all their purity, that the heart we knew to be so good should have its bounty all revealed, and the conscience so obedient to truth and duty should be laid open to the world.

But a biographer ought to be able to shew a better claim to public notice for his hero than his own desire, however amiable, to hang a garland of friendship upon his tomb; and this the



writer of the accompanying Memoir can do for him who is the subject of it. There is a moral to his tale of grave and powerful interest; for to the pleasing picture of a man rejoicing in the innocent pleasures of existence, and rich in the gifts of mind and disposition which could extract all its sweets, not only for himself but for others too, there is added the nobler spectacle of a sincere search after truth, of the unyielding advocacy of civil and religious liberty, and of the generous aspirations of "patriot, saint and sage."

In estimating GEORGE ARMSTRONG, whose life and character it is proposed to trace in the present volume from childhood to old age, as nearly as possible in his own words, by extracts from the journals, letters and other papers which he has left behind him, the writer is disposed to think that his chief claim to honour, and his highest merit as an example to others, will be found in his devotion to the pursuit of religious truth, and his uncompromising acceptance of all the consequences of his convictions, affect him as they might and did in his external position in society and in life. His outward conduct was a faithful reflex of the mind within; he never tampered with his conscience by attempts to fit his opinions to established customs or ancient prejudices, by non-natural interpretation of the language or the institutions in which they were expressed: directly they ceased to describe unmistakeably his personal convictions, he cast them off and stood uncovered, with nothing but his sense of right to protect him against the assaults, misrepresentations and misunderstandings of an unkind and often benighted world. Few, indeed, are the men who work out their opinions for themselves, particularly in religion, and have the courage to declare them openly, unappalled by the prejudices of society, the loss of social rank, or the probable forfeit of temporal advancement. Small is the number who will risk the world's frowns in the search for truth. Honour, then, to those who will and have!

"Salt of the earth, ye virtuous few  
Who season humankind!"

Our daily experience has, indeed, taught us to regard truth as the chief law of duty, on which hangs all the pleasure and

for the safety of our intercourse with our fellow-creatures in the common affairs of life, so that its habitual practice wins our confidence and regard at once. But in those higher and more speculative truths—those truths of opinion which do not so sensibly affect our practice, or which are not so near the comprehension of the crowd, the case is no longer the same, and if they are not in unison with the established or prevailing opinions of the hour, their professors are too often treated with suspicion, obloquy and contempt. So interested are men, on the one hand, in the maintenance of errors by which they profit,—so timid, on the other, lest by endeavouring “to quit the ills they have, they fly to others which they know not of,”—so idle and indifferent to the advance of anything of which they do not see the immediate and personal advantage, and so indisposed to the energy and labour of diligently inquiring into the claims of new opinions or discoveries on their acceptance and belief. Society continuing to throw impediments in the way of the pursuit of truth, and to check the manly avowal of convictions, if opposed to prevailing customs or fashionable prejudices, individual independence of character is crushed under conventional standards of propriety, and, consequently, perfect harmony of internal convictions with external practice is the rarest exhibition of strength of mind. In the science of theology this fact is more conspicuous than in any other. Liberty of conscience, recognized in theory and in our country’s laws, is still very imperfectly practised in the private life of our people or the public and denominational life of our Protestant churches. The great principle of the Reformation, the right of private judgment, is but imperfectly understood, and its legitimate consequences are still unaccepted by the majority of the Christians who inscribe the words upon their banners and applaud the sentiment at their meetings. Bigotry, intolerance and exclusion still prevail in our land of liberty, and we must look to such men as George Armstrong to hasten the advent of better times, coming no doubt, although coming slowly. In his lifetime, in these important duties, the pursuit of truth and the defence of the rights of

conscience, he did his part nobly and well; he has, then, a claim to the gratitude of the friends of liberty, and his life may be found useful alike for instruction and imitation, if haply his biographer can tell it as it deserves. The study of it will shew us that the advocates of consistent Protestantism in the nineteenth century are called upon to defend her sanctuary against the petty persecutions of society, almost as much as Milton and others were in the seventeenth against the persecutions of the State, and teach us to value charity, to respect truth, to honour justice, and love God in the person of one who toiled, suffered and rejoiced in their service.

Mr. Armstrong was an Irishman by birth, and spent the first and greater part of his life in his native country. The times in which he lived were remarkable in the early part of his career for the bitterness of religious and political controversy, and his natural inclination for such subjects was no doubt increased by their then prominence in the public mind. It will be seen in the accompanying Memoir how early he began to exercise his thoughts and pen upon them, and how they continued to be the occupation and business of his whole life. By the tendencies of his heart he was naturally led to the popular side in politics, but he did not fail to satisfy himself as to the correctness of these tendencies by the most diligent study and unprejudiced inquiry. In religion, also, his love of freedom soon shewed itself, but the same careful investigation of the claims of authority and tradition was applied by him to this great subject, and his note-books exhibit a remarkable amount of industry in the examination and analysis of the doctrines which have claimed, and still claim, the respect and adherence of so many wise and good men, but which he was obliged eventually to reject.

Catholic Emancipation was the great question of the day when Mr. Armstrong first began to think and write, and consequently the relative claims of Protestant and Catholic to the possession of Christian truth was a subject of unusually active discussion and bitter controversy. There were also the exciting topics of Parliamentary Reform and the Irish Church, all deeply inte-

resting questions, in which Mr. Armstrong bore a large and zealous part, and by which his religious and political opinions were very much developed and took the colouring that distinguished them through life.

He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and although originally intended for the Bar, ultimately adopted the Church as his profession. In either career his talents and connections would have, no doubt, secured him success, had he been content to follow the beaten track; but under any circumstances he must have loved the "independent thought and free expression" which, in the case of the Church at least, was fatal to advancement.

In the year 1854, in a letter to an old Irish friend, he thus pleasantly refers to his early days and to his possible and actual lot in life:—"I sometimes amuse myself by thinking on the *possibilities* of my subsequent life, had I (as once intended by my father) adopted the Bar as my profession. Some have told me that I should have been very likely to distinguish myself—that is to say, reach the honours of the profession; and as preferment then first began to flow in the direction of liberal politics in Ireland, there was no telling to what elevation of rank and office I might have at last come! At a Drogheda election—not soon to be forgotten by me or you—I remember well Mr. Wallace saying the House of Commons was the place for me! See with what tenacity the memory treasures up these vanities, and from what a world of trouble and doubtful honesty my humbler lot and *favouring* Providence have happily preserved me!"

And, again, a very near relative writing to him in the year 1856, adds in a postscript to his letter—"I heard it remarked lately that if you had stuck to the Church you would long since have been a Bishop, your politics being such as were sought for, and possibly have occupied the palace of Derry instead of Higgins. Alas, alas!"

We shall be able to trace, by the aid of his letters and papers, the gradual growth of his opinions, and see how carefully and studiously they were obtained, and how conscientiously they were obeyed; but the present is a favourable opportunity to

introduce a sketch of his early religious history, which he gives in a letter to a friend who, like himself, had quitted the Established Church from conscientious scruples.

“ Clifton, January, 1853.

“ My dear Mr. Gibson,—I have to thank you for the pleasure and interest I have felt in the perusal of your very instructive discourse on the ‘ Conflict of Personal Convictions with Clerical Obligations,’\* which you were so kind as to send me some time since. It is peculiarly rich in matter for reflection, and well adapted to take its place among the tracts for the times. But what a hopeless embarrassment hangs upon the whole subject!—and what reasonable prospect can there be of mending—at which ever end you begin—a system which, in any aspect of it, is a standing outrage upon human freedom and religious truth, and instead of reformation calls rather for extirpation?

“ You will say, ‘ Yes, but we must deal with circumstances on the best terms we can, and, if we cannot do all, approximate to a solution by doing the best and most we can.’ Admitted; and so you write a very excellent tract, in the best possible temper, and administering to one of the peccant parties some very wholesome and needed advice. *That* party, from early connection and circumstances, you have viewed and spoken of with great consideration and tenderness. For my own part, I have all through life regarded it with feelings the very opposite of yours.

“ They were my first prompters to the infidelity of those youthful years, of which the painful but not wholly useless experience is traceable, I suppose, in most men’s lives. Their doctrines were ever to me revolting to irritation. There was nothing in them to soothe, attract, conciliate; my boyhood years in college life could draw from them no help in their struggle with youthful sins and worldly vanities. ‘ You must resign the intellect or be lost, seek for evidence through enmity with reason—or you are on the way to the place of the doomed.’ And they went on, Sunday after Sunday, through all the Dublin

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\* Conflict of Personal Convictions with Clerical Obligations. By Robert Gibson. London—Whitfield. 1852.

circles in which I then moved, and in one form or another, week-day after week-day, in the same dreary round of violation of principles which I felt to be true, and to my further and further repulsion from the goal of *peace* and *light* which I equally felt to be all-important.

“When these deadly mischiefs, thanks to them and their popular preachers, and their pious women not a few, were too deeply seated not to leave terrible marks of their presence on the moral and internal character, and some precious years were already surrendered to the calls of youthful dissipation and sin, my better star began to peer in the horizon.

“Bishop Watson’s replies to Gibbon and Tom Paine aroused my thought and gratified my intellect. Paley’s *temperate* yet earnest sermons came in at the happy moment to help the process. His *Natural Theology* led further on in the consoling and joyous way to a rational Christianity based on supernatural guarantees; and his *Christian Evidences*, with Hoadly, Locke and Jortin, did the rest. I was now a thoughtful, happy, consistent Christian. But, alas! my trials were not yet over. I was now under the influence of reaction, and had become ‘serious;’ so much so, indeed, as to take into my hands, with an alacrity which nothing else could account for, after such a mortal experience as mine, the works of Wilberforce and H. More, at that time in the full tide of popularity. And though not to their doctrinal, certainly to the full extent of their *practical* requirements, I was among the number of their most enthusiastic admirers and converts. In this condition the *Church* presented itself as my proper and most congenial calling; till then the Bar having been marked out as the path of my professional life. Ambition’s voice was now completely hushed; my tastes had taken another direction. Religion’s peaceful retirement and useful duties filled up in prospect the future and happy years, few or many, during which I might be spared to minister in her service. I began to prepare for orders,—at that time, in Ireland, no very formidable task. Burnet was calm, argumentative, plausible, liberal; and, chiefly sheltered under the skirts of the Bishop of Sarum, I was ushered into the Episcopal presence, that of Christopher Butsen, Bishop

of Clonfert, an *élève* of Lord Sidmouth, who was to dismiss me with authority to preach the gospel. Ordained on a nomination to a curacy in the diocese of Meath, I speedily took possession of my post, and there continued preaching on the side of a cold hill, surrounded by a Romanist population, through whose midst I had to ride every Sunday, often finding it difficult to push my horse through them, on my way to the heretic church outside the village. There I continued to minister to some three or four county families, a few police, and an odd farmer or two, for a short six months, when I vacated my arduous post in order to marry an amiable lady, a widow, whose affairs rendered a residence for some time in Dublin indispensable.

“Under all the circumstances, I could hardly much repine at this necessity; one of its recommendations being that it afforded me an opportunity of pursuing with less interruption my professional studies. It turned out a professional mistake; it did not help to attach me to the ecclesiastical system of which I had become a member. I read and thought too freely; the blinkers rather unwittingly put on did not sit well on me, and would sometimes fairly drop off. And so I went on, still loving to associate with my Paley and my Hoadly and my Locke, and with Archdeacon Jortin and his *mischievous* Preface to his Ecclesiastical History, and, not less dangerous, the fourth volume of Bishop Watson’s Autobiography and the outpouring of a new interest in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, which by my own unaided reflection I was beginning to *understand* as I had never done before. Thus I went on through some mournful years, until an opportunity was pressed on me of returning to active duty in the diocese of Down, and under the auspices of its then Bishop, Dr. Mant. The parish of Bangor was placed at my disposal by the lay impropiator, the Right Hon. Colonel Ward, and pressed on my acceptance. Having a fine glebe-house and some acres of land attached to it, I was induced to remove there with my family, who were themselves of large connections in that neighbourhood—but never with internal satisfaction to myself. I liked my honoured and useful position, but I had too much light to reconcile myself to the constrained services by which this outward

honour and usefulness were to be available; and, oh! unlucky accident, a Belfast edition of Channing's discourse on the Ordination of Ezra Stiles Gannett left me more tormentingly dissatisfied than ever. From that hour I was a gone man; it only remained for circumstance and opportunity to determine when I should release myself from obligations which I was unable to fulfil, and abandon once and for all allegiance to a system that weighed down my soul's freedom, which was its life, and fettered my thoughts as they would ever and anon soar upwards to the source of light and truth and spiritual joy.

"Such was the Church to me, and such my active connection with the Church for a period of altogether about co-extensive with your own, namely, three years.

"You see what you have brought on yourself by your kind recollection of me in sending me your interesting discourse. But, in good truth, the history of *your* mind so intensely recalled my own intellectual and ecclesiastical experiences, that I could not forbear putting them on paper just as they recurred to me on sitting down to thank you for your present."

In the year 1837, after some years spent in study and much literary and other active service in the cause of liberal thought in religion and politics, he entered the ministry of the Unitarian Church with a sincerity of conviction in the truth and importance of the principles she taught which is quite delightful to behold. For twenty years he laboured in her service, and when, weakened by much suffering from disease, he was obliged to resign his pulpit, a spontaneous cry of sorrow and regret burst from all who had had the privilege of listening to his exhortations and sharing his pious cares and consolations. No one could hear him preach or deliver an address, particularly at the Lord's Supper, without feeling that his was peculiarly a bosom into which might be poured a confession of penitence and sorrow—that no cruel words of blame would chill the accents of pity; but that in gentle consolations and holy warnings he would lead the wounded or newly awakened soul to the waters of life—that the elements of bitterness which must mingle with the draught



would only be felt as a stimulus to renewed obedience and holier vows of duty. Of what heavenly mould are natures such as these—how precious the oil they pour upon the troubled sea of life—how powerfully their lives advocate the truths their Master has revealed!

With the eloquence of his country he had also her enthusiasm and warmth of temperament. What he loved he delighted in exalting, and what he disliked he was equally energetic in denouncing. He has, consequently, been reproached with uncharitableness in his opinions of those who differed from him in opinion, and with being indisposed to make proper allowances for education, position or a different point of view. But this was only in his public capacity, when he thought the exigences of truth required it; in his private character he was the gentlest of men, his hand ever ready and his heart ever open to the worthy of every creed and station. His own estimate of his abilities was most modest; the humblest might correct him without fear of giving him offence. He was always anxious to encourage the weak, was the most generous critic of the strong, and perfectly free from a habit, not uncommon among clever men, of disparaging the talents and labours of others.\*

In philosophy he was a follower of John Locke, whom he worshiped as one of the greatest of English heroes. He looked with great distrust on the "spiritualists," and was wont rather irreverently to call their theory "nebulous," and its advocates "dreamers." Still, if he sought his evidences of truth in the world without, he sought its sanctions in the world within. If

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\* The Rev. William James, of Bristol, in a recent letter to the writer, thus speaks of this "fine quality" in the character of his deceased colleague: "I had intended, if I had seen you, to say that one feature of Mr. Armstrong's mind was worthy of particular notice—I mean his truly generous appreciation of what was good and able in the mind and character of others. There was not a spark of what was envious in his composition. He was always the first to admire talent or excellence in another, and heartily to commend it. I think I never saw a man more entirely free from jealousy, more ready to give praise where he thought it due, more desirous of encouraging the efforts of others. There was no professional littleness about him. He delighted to hear of and to witness the success of others. In this particular I have often thought he resembled John the Baptist, who said of Christ, and said it rejoicingly, 'He must increase, and I must decrease.'"

he followed Locke in his explanation of the source of our ideas, he rose with him also to the full height of the argument in defence of the sublime faculty of reason that unravelled their mysteries and explained their connections.

As a theologian, a biblical critic and a scientific politician, he has considerable claims to respect, as his works have already testified and his correspondence will again bear witness; but the great interest of his life lies in his practical fidelity to his intellectual convictions.

"The history of one who stands out, and by *individual veracity* attracts the notice of mankind," says Mr. Thom, in his introduction to the Life of Blanco White, "should, on grounds altogether apart from religious dogmas or doubtful controversies, be as precious to the world as martyrs' blood." And so "precious" George Armstrong most certainly deserves to be. He founded no new school of thought, he made no new discoveries in science, he headed the victory to no great reform; but still he led a life admirable to see and worthy to be recorded, for he was loyal to Truth. She found him on the road to distinction and honour in the world; she led him, to use his own words, to "anticipated obscurity:" but she found him with a good conscience; he carried her torch triumphantly, and she gave him peace with God.

The writer will be excused for saying a few words as to his treatment of the private papers and journals committed to his charge. He has not scrupled, and for this some of his readers may blame him, to extract passages descriptive of thoughts and emotions of a sacred and private character. But he must plead as his justification that the public conduct of a man who courts criticism for his acts by great changes of opinion and an aggressive zeal in their defence, not unmixed with strong denunciations of those he has quitted, cannot be properly appreciated by the ordinary observer without some real insight into the inmost recesses of his heart and mind. He hopes he has in no instance offended against good taste, but he was anxious to shew his friend not only as a confessor and a Christian minister, but as a genial human creature, by no means indifferent to this life and its many

joys, nor exempt from its many sorrows, rich in powers of observation and appreciation of the true and beautiful in the world of home and art and nature, warm in his sympathies and demonstrative in his affections. Without this record of the soul's secret issues, a biography loses all its pith; the kernel of the nut is gone, leaving nothing but the dry husk. It would be like hanging the best clothes of the man upon a lay figure, instead of putting his every-day suit upon his breathing form. Carlyle, speaking of such a work, says, "A feast of widest biographic insight is spread for us; we enter full of hungry anticipations: alas, like so many other feasts which life invites us to, a mere Ossian's 'feast of *shells*'—the food and liquor being all emptied out and clean gone, and only the vacant dishes and deceitful emblems thereof left!"

Without pretending to "a feast of widest biography," the writer hopes the friends and admirers of the late Rev. George Armstrong will find in the accompanying sketch something more than "a feast of shells."

## MEMOIR.

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MR. ARMSTRONG was born in the year 1792, at Drogheda, in Ireland; but losing his mother early in his childhood, he was removed from the paternal roof to the house of his grandfather, at a place called Flower Hill, in Navan, county of Meath, where he passed the greater part of his youth, and which he ever remembered with great delight. Many, many years after he had quitted it, there are entries in his journals of visits paid to this spot, so endeared by sweet recollections, and of the thoughts suggested by the contrast of the past and the then present time. Amid scenes so associated with his early education, so redolent of pious cares and tender counsels, he seems to have felt like an exiled patriot treading by stealth the pathways of his native land;—so powerful are the ties which bind us to opinions taught by lips revered and loved, their ghosts, as it were, will, under such circumstances, haunt us with a sort of sorrowful reproach.\* And these hallowed memories,

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\* It requires great fortitude not to lose one's self-possession when gentle women and innocent children, joining their hands in supplication, cry, "Believe as we believe." It is consolatory to recollect that while this separation between the simple and the cultivated minds of humanity is an inexorable law of our transitory state here, there is a higher region for noble souls, where those who ignorantly curse one another, without knowing it often meet;—that ideal city contemplated by the seer of the Apocalypse, towards which a crowd was hurrying that no man could number,—men of every tribe, of every nation, of every language, proclaiming with one voice that creed in which all join—"Holy, holy, holy, is He who is, who was, and who is to come."—*Ernest Renan*—" *Etudes Religieuses*."

with all their subtle influence, should not be forgotten in the estimation of Mr. Armstrong's mental struggles; for his heart was eminently tender, full of reverence for the relationships of home, and eager to give and to receive affection.

At Flower Hill, under the superintendence of a loving aunt, his education was commenced; and there is a letter still extant, written by him to his father in 1801, in a large round hand, with a postscript of the said aunt, speaking with praise of the temper and intelligence of her charge.

His boyish days were not more remarkable than those of other high-spirited, amiable and clever lads; so we may pass over them and his preliminary studies until we find him at Trinity College, Dublin, just beginning the higher and more influential branches of his education. His letters to his father during this period will give the most life-like picture of the young man.

“December 1, 1809.

“My dear Father,—I write to return thanks for the enclosure you sent me in your letter. . . . .

“I must now free myself from negligence in not telling you anything about my college affairs; in fact, I was not altogether acquainted with them when I wrote before.

“Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at nine o'clock, I attend a Greek lecture (in Homer), from which, indeed, I derive *no advantage whatever*; for among such a number, some may be there for months and never have a question put to them, which has been my case. This is a public lecture given in the hall. Every day I attend a Logic lecture in my tutor's rooms at half-past twelve, and this is of great use to me. I am going on pretty well with that; and I assure you Mr. Kyle no later than yesterday told me he was glad to find I could chop logic so well, and that he had no doubt in a short time I should have a very good knowledge of it, at the same time wishing all his pupils understood it equally well; at which I was highly flattered. In the religious department, I must be at three chapels in the week, besides one on Sunday morning. I conclude from your words you expect I shall get a premium; indeed, nothing

could give me more gratification than that your expectations (I shan't say mine) should be verified. . . . . Term will be over in a fortnight, and will not re-commence until the examinations, 20th January. I think I could read better here than at Kilsarvan; but at all events I may bring my books down there for a fortnight or so immediately at Christmas. I went to hear Braham and Mrs. Mountain in the Siege of Belgrade last week with the Temples, and am to go at John's expense, together with his family, on Monday night. It is almost worth your while, as you are so fond of fine singing, to come to hear him: no comparison whatever between him and Incledon. The play-house is fitted up most superbly. . . . .

"Having told you everything, except the news of the destruction of the Toulon fleet—by an official account, five sail of the line taken and destroyed, six frigates and all the transports, to the number of twenty, with troops on board destined for Barcelona—but you will hear all this by to-night's paper. . . . ."

"May 9, 1810.

"Not without some discontent do I tell you I lost the premium, with the satisfaction, however, of having contended it to the last. I had the advantage in Homer, and my opponent (Wolfe,\* with whom I cut last time) had the superiority in Horace, which rendered us equal; but, alas! his *theme* was better than mine, which decided it. The examiner (Wall) said he wished there were premiums apiece for us; he said I answered excessively well; and to get 'Valde in omnibus' both for science and classics, I hope you'll allow some merit too; at all events, it will add, if possible, to my exertions for the next time, which will be on July 2 or 3. Downes, whom I since find is a nephew of the Chief Justice's, got the science premium. There was a fine lad there, a son of Saurin (Attorney-general), actually crying at losing the premium in my division. Wolfe is also of Lord Kilwarden's family; so you see with whom I have to start in the race of literature; and upon my honour, none but Wolfe and I contended for the *last hour*. I have now laid the whole

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\* The author of the famous lines on the Burial of Sir John Moore.

case before you. Tell Andrew to send me up immediately my Sallust and my old Euclid, as I want to lend it to Thompson, who must buy one otherwise; and as I have another, I can dispense with one of them—he will find them in the chest. The fiddle that was here has been taken away, so I should be glad if you would send me mine, well stocked with strings, the first opportunity.”

“Nov. 17, 1813.

“I feel greatly obliged for your kindness in remitting me the order for the purchase of the mare I have got; the possession of one in Dublin will certainly be very agreeable, and I have no doubt equally useful to me: don't think me very extravagant in requiring so much as £40 at least to pay for her, as upon consulting the scale of expenses I have laid down for myself, I could not have afforded to add much out of my own purse. You need not be at all apprehensive of my being too much engaged with the pleasure I propose myself in riding out; it shall be entirely secondary to the main end of my stay in Dublin. George did pay Dr. Kyle's account, in consequence of your order. I shall take care of the phosphorus. I hope you may soon have an opportunity of sending me some oats; we pay 20s. for some very indifferent.”

“Feb. 2, 1814.

“I am on the high road to a Bachelor's degree, having concluded my *undergraduate course* very respectably on Saturday last. I am now going to enter on a different course, which will occupy me pretty regularly till July next. There will be no interruption to our business until Easter, which I fear will prevent my accompanying you to the North, unless you desire it very particularly, in which case I must compound for the loss of this term. I wish to finish this part of my college studies as soon as possible, in order to have the time previous to my ordination as much at my own discretion as I can, there being several works to which I could not so conveniently apply myself at any other time.”

“April 16th, 1815.

“I have allowed the 1st April to elapse a fortnight, and am

now induced to trouble you for an order on G. R. A. for the present quarter's allowance. I wish to pay Mr. Talbot some money; in other respects I am little in want of any considerable sum, as I generally hold credit for most articles; however, I prefer having it by me, in case of emergency, and this is the only reason I ever had for requiring my stipend in advance. To pay me £120 a-year is no doubt a considerable deduction from your income; and if you knew how reluctantly I am thus troublesome, you would spare me the pain of ever lecturing me on the subject. No one can be further from extravagance in every shape than I am; I take no pleasure in the usual encouragements to it—the streets; I abhor company, and public places I never think of; my present lodgings perhaps may be dearer by somewhat than I might have procured them in Britain or in Capel Street; but they are enviable for cheerfulness, comfort, good air and retirement. My clothing is not expensive; I dress for convenience and decency, not for foppery: if the keeping a horse increases my expenditure, it yet contributes much to my health and pleasure. Now is there anything unreasonable in all this? anything which it is unfair to expect from you? Say so, and I shall instantly part with my mare, and return you what you gave me to purchase her with.

“As yet I have only spoken of my ordinary living expenses, assuming it to be necessary to be in town. In other respects I am abundantly well off; but I think your views with respect to the remaining part of my education to be somewhat confined. Had I been sent to a merchant's or an attorney's office, the apprenticeship and other fees would have been considerable; had I gone to the Bar, the expenses would have been alarming; but now that I am going to the Church, chance and whatever scrapings I am able to spare are the only resource I have for procuring any knowledge in addition to what may be collected from college forms and the unsatisfactory gleanings from a public library.

“In dwelling on this subject, I fear I labour under a great disadvantage in one respect. You, my dear father, have never had occasion to turn your thoughts this way, and perhaps you think it quite superfluous for a clergyman to be qualified for



anything farther than the delivery of a commonplace harangue once a week. Many think the clergy a set of hypocrites, that all they preach is stuff, and, consequently, it would be to little end that they should study. Many hypocrites and bad men there certainly are among them; many, too, shamefully deficient in knowledge and address; but there would have been fewer of each had they been better educated, had they read more and acquired proper notions of the importance of their duties. I once mentioned the Bishop of Lincoln to you, and quoted part of the Preface to a late work of his. I have since got it. He there observes, that 'there never was a period when professional learning in the clergy was so requisite as it is now.' He then adds a list of books which he warmly recommends, and wishes 'that the purchase of them should be considered a necessary part of the expenses of the education of every person designed for the clerical profession.' Shall I add, that he mentions in a note that the whole may be purchased for about £75. Don't be frightened! This is a large sum; but the tenth of it would be very ample for me at present. I am glad to admit you have been always liberal to me; . . . . forgive me if I have said anything amiss, and believe me always," &c. &c.

The battle of Waterloo, in the month of June following the date of this last letter, having put an end to the war and opened the continent to travellers, Mr. Armstrong, accompanied by some friends of his own age, set off for a tour through Belgium and France in the autumn. His letter to his father from Paris, descriptive of his adventures, seems of sufficient interest, from the scenes it describes, the reflections he makes upon them, and the remarkable time in which it was written, to deserve a place in the Memoir of the writer. It will be found among the extracts from his correspondence at the end of the volume.

On his return from the continent in the autumn of 1815, he was ordained a clergyman of the Established Church, and entered on the ministry as curate of a place called Horseleap. Here he remained until the following spring, when the prospect of his marriage, to which he refers in the letter to Mr. Gibson quoted

in the Introduction, induced him to resign the appointment. He seems to have liked his vocation ; and the following letter to the Bishop, acquainting him with his intention, shews that he had then no intention of separating himself from the Church, nor had any mental misgivings about his duties as a clergyman :

“ Belview, April 2, 1816.

“ My Lord,—I feel myself impelled by every consideration of duty to apprize you of an intention which extreme necessity has obliged me to adopt, and which I trust will be viewed with the same indulgence I have hitherto experienced at your Lordship's hands.

“ Some very pressing *family affairs* will, I apprehend, oblige me to relinquish the curacy of Horseleap at the expiration of my present quarter with Mr. Usher, which will be about the first week in May.

“ Circumstances have occurred to me which as yet—with submission to your Lordship—I should rather avoid communicating, but which, I am persuaded, should they come to your notice, will acquit me of any appearance of indiscretion or indelicacy in my present step.

“ I have not any immediate prospect of removing into another diocese ; but believe me, my Lord, under whatever circumstances I may be, it shall never be my wish ‘ to make God's work a sine-cure.’ I shall ever be mindful of the sacred function I have embraced, and gratefully remember the kindness and condescension of your Lordship's assistance in placing me in it.

“ I am in hopes I may be able by diligent inquiry to procure a successor agreeable to your choice ; and should the purport of this letter appear to be at all incorrect or unusual, I entreat that it may rather be attributed to inexperience than design or any deficiency of respect in, my Lord,

“ Your Lordship's very grateful and obliged servant,

“ G. A.”

“ The Right Hon. and Right Rev. the Lord  
Bishop of Meath, Dublin.”

In the summer of this year (1816) Mr. Armstrong was married,

and took up his residence in Dublin, where he remained until the autumn of 1818, when he removed to a country house at Bingfield, near Crosdoney. Here he passed some of his happiest days, in the delights of study, the pleasures of rural life and the duties of home. The house was pleasantly situated, the land was good and the society agreeable. Amid books and agricultural experiments—for he farmed on a tolerably large scale for a gentleman—he passed his time industriously and usefully; never, however, forgetting in his retirement his duty to the great world without, preaching occasionally for the neighbouring clergymen, and watching with a quick eye and a warm heart the struggles, whether of nations or individual men, for liberty and light. His mind was busy too on his own account, in the pursuit of high subjects of thought, and he was steadily pursuing the independent course of reading and reflection which gave him the rich stores from which he drew at a future day. The following letter to his brother gives us a glance at his thoughts and feelings at the end of his first year at Bingfield:

*Letter to Andrew Armstrong, Esq., dated Bingfield, Oct. 21, 1819.*

“My dear Andrew,—. . . Now for your observations about the book I received by Owen, the history of which is this. When I was in Bath, I met with a tract by a Mr. Rennell,\* professing to be a defence of the immateriality of the soul, against the doctrines of Mr. Lawrence, of the College of Surgeons, London, and imputing motives, as I thought very unwarrantable, to that eminent writer. Mr. Rennell’s arguments and method convinced me that he was quite incompetent to the task he had undertaken. Some time after, on my return to Dublin, I saw advertised in a London paper the work in question; but perceiving it to come through Carlile’s shop, where I had been greatly disgusted and offended when in London, it struck me that, as Mr. Rennell himself had foolishly entered into a commonplace disquisition on ‘scepticism,’ which had no imaginable connection with the subject to which he ought to have confined his answer, if he had one, so this reply or review, coming through such a channel,

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\* Vicar of Kensington and Christian Advocate at Cambridge.

might very probably contain a great deal of matter which I had no curiosity to read, though I could have very little fear to encounter it. I therefore thought of it no more, till a late occasion revived in my mind the consideration of the subject upon which Mr. Rennell had treated.

“It would take more time than I am sure you would willingly spare to this subject, to let you distinctly into the grounds of the question I allude to; I shall therefore merely mention that before I left town Mr. A. Carmichael had shewn me an able essay of his in MS., which he proposed reading at the approaching assembly of the R. I. Academy in October, on the Nature of the Human Soul both in its Present and Future State. Many of his ideas agreed with mine, more particularly with those which had occurred to me upon perusing Mr. Rennell’s book, and, formerly, upon reading the far different ideas of Locke upon the same subject. I was therefore encouraged to set down my thoughts on paper, and send them to Mr. Carmichael, who, in writing to me shortly after, was so good as to speak in the most flattering terms of approbation of my letter, and pressed me warmly to let him read it before the Academy. This, however, I declined. Mr. Rennell was largely the subject of my observations; and indeed it was no very difficult matter to shew how very little light he had thrown on the metaphysical nature of the human soul, or upon its prospects of a continued existence hereafter, on such fallible and dangerous grounds as he had maintained. The consideration of his arguments, however, made me anxious to see how far the ideas of others might tally with my own; and the book I wrote for being the only answer I had heard of, I was resolved to have it, fully prepared for, or at least strongly suspecting—what has since turned out to be the case—a predominant mixture of matter, likely enough to have been provoked in such a quarter by the ill-digested and inappropriate remarks of Mr. Rennell, and quite as irrelevant to the original question.

“Thus much I thought it due to your kindness to say. You perceive I wrote for this book, not in order to see what the author had to say against the truth of Christianity, which had nothing to do with the inquiry I was interested in, but with a

view to what he might advance against that part of Mr. Rennell's tract which strictly related to the question; but even had my proceeding originated in a desire to peruse an attack on Christianity, I should see nothing wherein to blame myself. I trust it is the blessing of those who have taken up their faith on rational grounds not to be 'knocked of a heap' at every commotion of the press, or every whiff of a pamphlet it sends forth. In such perilous and trying times, I am in truth decided in opinion that it is the duty of all such, and more particularly the clergy, not to suffer themselves to be taken by surprise, but to possess themselves of, to read and mark, those publications that boast of such high pretensions, and, should neither opportunity nor ability warrant the enterprize of publicly commenting on them, at least to convince our own minds in private, and those waverers whom chance might throw in our way, that there is nothing in these publications which ought to disturb our convictions or intrude upon our peace; and in fact I never felt myself more impelled, than upon reading Carlile's trial and looking over this volume which I have got, to arrange and strengthen for my own satisfaction, and possibly for the benefit of those more particularly interested in my pursuits hereafter, the arguments by which I have convinced myself that the Christian religion is true, and that those objections, so magnified and reiterated by its adversaries, are not of the weight they would wish us to believe. I could unload my mind of a great deal more, but with respect to your observations I have perhaps said enough, and will only add that I am," &c. &c.

This letter to Mr. Carmichael was afterwards expanded into an essay, which was printed and published under the title of "The Reputed Immateriality of the Human Soul, with Strictures on the Rev. T. Rennell's late Publication."\*

Of his political sympathies, another letter to his brother, dated Bingfield, April 19, 1820, gives a good idea:

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\* Mr. Hunter, of St. Paul's Churchyard, the publisher, speaking of this pamphlet in a letter to Mr. Armstrong, dated 1829, says, "In the new edition of Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, edited by Mr. Richard Taylor, the 'Reputed Immateriality' is mentioned with commendation; and Mr. T. told me privately that he thought it the most philosophical essay he had seen for twenty years."

"Election matters all quiet in Drogheda. How does Metcalfe carry his new honours? Never write to me without a frank now. If he does not support Lambton's reform, *I'll set up myself the next time*. How strange the conviction of Hunt at York, in the teeth of the evidence and even of the Judge's charge! The trial presents the 'Manchester authorities' and Castlereagh's lies in the House of Commons in a pretty light. No wonder the people should be maddened."

The following extract from the commencement of a will found among his papers seems to make him speak to us from Bingfield, June, 1820:

" . . . My books I wish never to be parted with; my writings and papers, such as they are, I wish to be preserved and assorted. . . . Not having been so fortunate as to meet with an engagement in my profession suitable to the circumstances in which I am, it was my lot to have abundant leisure to indulge in study. I have undoubtedly not made the best use of my time, but I have at least been at some pains to find Truth, so far as my abilities and opportunities reached. It has always appeared to me, however, that the profession I embarked in, when my thoughts were much less excursive, is very much opposed to the free exercise of the mind in this noble and delightful pursuit. This frequently made me uncomfortable; the reason of which will be easily apprehended. I could not overcome my desire to 'prove all things,' and to act in the spirit of that most rational precept, which the apostle recommends in another passage, 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' Either, then, I must not have examined at all—the case with nine-tenths of mankind, and undoubtedly of nineteen-twentieths of the clergy—or I must have examined freely; in which case there were many odds against my just sitting down contented with what most reverend high-priests in the sixteenth century first settled to be truth, and which sucking parsons in all ages since have been so ready to swallow without hitch or hiccup, when a patron or a promise or expectancy have assisted at the deglutition. But I must desist from such reflections (necessarily acrimonious) in such a paper as this." Here the paper ended and was never touched again.

Mr. Armstrong's wish for a more active life, and the persuasion of his friends, seem to have overcome his evidently increasing dislike to the confinement of the Creeds and Articles of the Established Church, and at the beginning of the year 1823 we find him meditating a resumption of his duties as a clergyman. The following is a letter on the subject to his friend the Bishop of Kilmore:

“Bingfield, Jan. 28, 1823.

“My dear Lord,—I have been lately very unexpectedly involved in a negotiation with the Archdeacon of Down for the appointment to a perpetual cure in his gift, owing to an application from some gentlemen in the parish of Drumbridge who are anxious to have me settled among them. I have accordingly already forwarded a certificate from a particular friend of mine (Mr. S—— R——, rector of Skryne), which has proved most satisfactory; but I learn from the Archdeacon that formality requires me also to be furnished with some reference to the Bishop in whose diocese I have officiated. I am fully aware that in addressing your Lordship on this point, I am taking a liberty in which I am not strictly justified; but the truth is, I was for so very short a time engaged in the diocese of Meath, and that at so considerable an interval, and not having had any intercourse with the Bishop of Meath since that period, I am doubtful how far I could with propriety apply to him on the present occasion.

“I am therefore induced, my Lord—fully assured that your testimony would be amply sufficient—to request that you would kindly, and with the least possible delay, oblige me by your recommendation in whatever form you may judge most fit, and allow me to remain,” &c. &c.

“To the Lord Bishop of Kilmore.”

The Bishop replied as follows:

“Dublin, Feb. 4, 1823.

“My dear Sir,—I have seen the Bishop of Down, and I told him that although you were not an officiating clergyman in my diocese, you resided in it for some time, and I had heard you frequently preach with great admiration,—that any certificate he required, such being the circumstances, I would with pleasure

give. He said you had been recommended to his son by most respectable persons in the parish, and from what passed I should think your wishes will be accomplished. Any certificate either the Bishop or the Archdeacon may require, I will give as far as I can.

“Ever yours faithfully,

“GEORGE KILMORE.”

“To the Rev. George Armstrong.”

Mr. Armstrong was duly appointed to the living, but he does not appear to have taken final possession of it until May 1824, when he removed with his family from Bingfield to the glebe house at Bangor, near Belfast. He seems to have quitted the former place, his much-loved home, with some misgivings, his mind not quite satisfied as to the propriety of the step he was taking: the questionable mental assent he could give to the letter of the doctrines and the spirit of the Church, which this act so publicly sanctioned and acknowledged, troubled him. But then was not the position one of honour and usefulness; would not his interpretation of these doctrines and his practical illustrations of this spirit infuse charity and truth and love into the dry bones of orthodoxy, authority and exclusion? Such reflections might well make the most conscientious man hesitate as to the real path of duty; how many do they not reconcile to a position which involves a contradiction between their personal convictions and their corporate responsibilities! And then “his family were of large connections in that neighbourhood”—wife and children, their wishes and their interests, and, perhaps, the not unworthy whisperings of self-esteem—all influences subtle and strong, as our own mortal experience will at once acknowledge.

In the spring of 1824, Mr. Armstrong takes possession of his clerical domains and begins his duties as a parish clergyman. In a position so suited to his talents and his disposition, he could not fail to enlist the sympathy and gain the respect and affection of his parishioners. The poor loved him for the qualities of his heart, and the rich and refined added their appreciation of the accomplishments of his mind. With much to make him happy, much to attach him to his new home and its congenial pursuits, there was one thing wanting, which we shall presently see soon



compelled him to break through the conditions it imposed—  
“Liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience.”

In the year 1825, there was great excitement in Ireland about Catholic Emancipation, and the political side of the question could not fail to exhibit the religious side in all its virulence and hate. Among the subjects angrily discussed was the propriety of an indiscriminate distribution of the Bible, the Catholics and Protestants defending their respective and characteristic views with little charity, and sometimes with still less consistency. Mr. Armstrong was not likely to be a passive spectator of such a contest. He threw himself into the thickest of the controversy, and in newspapers and periodicals liberal enough to admit his letters defended the right of private judgment. But the logical conclusions of his premises took him further than other zealots of his party were prepared to go, and the “Christian Examiner and Church-of-Ireland Magazine” spoke of his writings “as too latitudinarian in their nature and too dangerous in their tendency to be admitted into the pages of a miscellany which by its very title avows its adherence to the tenets of the Established Church,”\* and regretted “that in that Church there could be found a clergyman who would venture to avow them.”†

The tendency of his mind and studies at this time was evidently in a direction to fortify himself in a growing determination to take his leave of the public service, at least, of a Church which left no room for the expression of his conscientious convictions. In a commonplace-book in which he dotted down his thoughts and made memoranda of the books he read, with occasional observations upon their contents, there is the following entry, dated Bangor, January, 1826:

“The following passage is worth transcribing. I found it in a paper of a very meritorious and talented work called the ‘Free-thinker,’ published so long ago as 1723, to which many distinguished men contributed their assistance:

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\* See No. V. of *Christian Examiner*, pp. 356, 414.

† See No. IX. of same, back of title-page.

“ ‘He alone is properly a wise man, a philosopher or lover of wisdom, who disdains to submit his reason to the prejudices of custom, of education, of authority, of interest or of passion; who, to the utmost of his ability, examines into all things impartially before he determines either to approve or to reject them; and who is neither unwilling nor *afraid* to enlarge his understanding and to exercise the faculties of his mind *freely upon every kind of knowledge* which he thinks worthy of his notice, or his duty to learn, as a man.’ ‘Neither to be afraid to avow a truth, nor ashamed to retract an error,’ are the concluding words of the third volume, the last of that work which I have seen.”

He had become too a subscriber to the “Monthly Repository,” a magazine conducted by the late Rev. Robert Aspland, the Unitarian minister of Hackney; and this same commonplace-book contains some laudatory criticisms of its contents. Some sermons and essays of Dr. Channing’s falling into his hands, finally determined him to resign his Church preferment, as he has himself told us.\* In the summer of 1826, he was back at “dear Bingfield.” No particulars of the exact circumstances attending the resignation of his living are preserved; but one of his parishioners, now a resident in this country, informs me that he was a popular preacher and minister, and that his secession caused great grief to his friends at Bangor.

In the month of October of that year, he sent a paper on the “Bible Controversy in Ireland” to Mr. Hunter, the bookseller, for insertion in the Monthly Repository. Denied admittance to the organs of so-called Protestantism in his own country, he sought already a refuge among its more consistent advocates in England.† The editor’s reply is interesting:

“Hackney, near London, Oct. 27, 1826.

“Dear Sir,—Our mutual friend Mr. Hunter has put your letter to him, as well as your communication to the Monthly Repository, into my hands, with a request that I would answer the former, which I am very happy to do.

\* See letter to Mr. Gibson, quoted in the Introduction.

† See Monthly Repository, Vol. XXI. p. 573.

"I need not say that your paper has given me great pleasure, not only on account of the handsome manner in which the Repository is spoken of in it, but also on account of the truly Protestant and Christian spirit which it breathes,—a spirit, alas! so rare in ill-fated Ireland. To shew my opinion of it, I have printed it as the first article in the forthcoming number. I am anxious to receive the promised continuation, especially as my editorial functions with regard to the Repository will cease and determine with the ensuing month of November. A new and, I hope, a much improved series of the work will commence on the 1st of January. . . .

"I may possibly be straitened for matter for two numbers in one month, and should be glad if your leisure would permit you to favour me with a communication for each. You see I grow at once familiar with you, though a personal stranger; but the kind tone of your writing has inspired me with confidence. . . .

"With much esteem and respect, I remain, dear Sir, yours &c.,  
"ROBERT ASPLAND."

The Catholic controversy continued to occupy his thoughts. The study of it had evidently led him to see the inconsistent position of the Established Church, the Church "that does not err," in a contest for Protestant principles with the Church of Rome, "that cannot err," and determined his secession from his public functions as a clergyman. But it does not appear that he had as yet sufficiently defined his opinions of the orthodox doctrines of the Trinity, Atonement, Original Sin and their accompaniments, although he doubted and disliked them, to induce him utterly to abandon the Church and give his avowed adherence to another denomination of Christians. The first shock to his conscience was the assumption of infallibility which orthodoxy involves, and its practical denial of the right of private judgment.

At the close of this year (1826) he makes the following reflections in his note-book:

"Inscii rapimur! Another year has closed upon us. What progress have I made in knowledge, what in wisdom, and how have these been indicated? What new books have I by study

made myself master of, what new ideas have I acquired, or what former ones worth retaining have I confirmed and enlarged?

"Of the former I cannot pretend that in the course of the year past I have considerably added to my store. My thoughts have ranged very much in the same circle they had occupied in preceding years, and I must only vindicate myself from the charge of mental inaction by hoping that in point of *wisdom* I may not have been altogether idle. . . .

"Have I, however, imparted to others any of my own reflections, either acquired or confirmed within the period now considered? Has my *intellectual life* for the last twelve months been wholly *solitary*? Has the world, through any channel, received into its common stock of intelligence so much as a single note from me? I feel pleased in answering that it has. . . .

"As of all other social blessings, to use the noble phrase of Milton, 'the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely,' is the very greatest, so in proportion as I have perceived any limitations opposed, or any odium attached, to this liberty, let these attempts be made from what quarter they may, I have felt an irresistible impulse to resist them. With this feeling, I have too often found occasion to throw myself into the arena against the parties who are at present so actively engaged, the one in impugning, the other in apparently defending, this great maxim in its particular application to religious inquiries. I have found that in effect, and just as it too clearly proved at the vaunted liberation of the minds of men from the sway of Rome, the latter party is as little the friend at this moment as it was then, and quite as ill effected as their more consistent antagonists, to that precious liberty for which they would seem to be such ardent advocates. 'Heresies—only a more convenient term for varieties of opinion—will ensue,' cries the priesthood of Rome, 'from this liberty you contend for!' *Alarmed* by the *reproach*, and consenting to the imagined *danger* of this *variety*, 'Nay,' cry these heralds of freedom, 'the more men examine for themselves, the less probability will there be for *speculative disagreement* upon the word of God;—the more surely indeed may we expect them not merely to be of one *affection*, but of one *opinion* upon the

whole contents of that important, though often complicated, book, the Bible.'

"Now, admitting the probability of much greater unity of opinion than has ever yet existed, although in a sense very different from theirs, yet in the mean time the obvious reply of the genuine friend of freedom and of truth is, that *no* so-called heresy—*no* variety of opinion, conceived in the fear of God and in the faithful exercise of our faculties, *can* involve the remotest danger to any human being; and that the application of any invective or reproach to those who arrive at opinions however opposite to those of the party who presumes to judge for any other than themselves, must be as offensive to Him who rules the world in truth, as the more violent but consistent application of restraints by which *that* Church has been distinguished, for whose annihilation by the progressive force of reason every *lover of wisdom*—since we may not say philosopher—upon earth must be incessantly anxious. . . . May every year find us more advanced towards the proper end of our being,—the cultivation of our moral and intellectual nature here, and the fruition allotted to just men made perfect 'hereafter'!—December 31st, 1826."

The idea of reforming the service of the Established Church, probably with a view to his retaining some connection with it, seems to have occupied his mind about this time. An interesting letter on this subject to the Bishop of Kilmore will be found in the Appendix.

But the Catholic controversy still continued to claim his more particular attention, and a public discussion between a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister, held at the Dublin Institution in the year 1827,\* called forth the most able and complete of his published works. The title of this book was "Infallibility not possible—Involuntary Error not culpable."† In a review of it in the Examiner of January, 1830, it is thus spoken of:

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\* See Authentic Report of the Discussion between the Rev. R. T. Pope and Rev. Thomas Maguire. Dublin—Curry and Co. 1827. Daniel O'Connell was one of the Chairmen.

† Some interesting letters from distinguished men about this book will be found in the Appendix. A second edition was published by Mr. Chapman, London, in 1851.

“The field of religious disputation does not come within the range of our critical cognizance; but when, as in the present instance, a writer extends the polemical province so as to bring within the scope of his advocacy principles of the dearest import to mankind, we cannot permit ourselves to be distant and neutral spectators of the generous strife. The greater portion of the work is applied to controverting the Catholic doctrine of Infallibility, and on this question the author avails himself most aptly of extensive learning, and manifests argumentative powers of a very high order.”

The Editor of the Examiner also quotes with great approbation a letter he had received from Mr. Armstrong, in which he thus describes the motives which induced him to write the book just mentioned :

“There is one great point upon which I confess I am more than commonly enthusiastic—a point upon which I have long thought that the interests of human society cannot be too sedulously watched and cherished—I mean the right to form, and I may add to propagate, our religious opinions without let or molestation, without annoyance or reproach from any man or set of men living. And in order to prepare for the universal admission and adoption of this momentous right, there can be no demonstration more important to establish than the **ABSOLUTE INNOCENCY OF CONSCIENTIOUS ERROR.**”

There is a pleasant glimpse of Mr. Armstrong about this time in the published *Life of the Rev. Henry Ware, Jun.* (p. 279), who, writing to Professor Norton on August 14, 1829, thus speaks of him :

“One particularly interesting occurrence has been my visit to a Mr. Armstrong, once a clergyman of the Establishment, who has thrown up his living because of his growing dislike to orthodoxy. I found a letter from him in Dublin, inviting me as an American, a Unitarian and a friend of Dr. Channing, to visit him; and, as his house is but twenty-five miles from Edgeworthstone, we took it in our route. He is a fine scholar, and a man of talent, frankness and ardent zeal, intimate with American history, partial to our country, and enthusiastic in his admiration

of Dr. Channing, who can tell you about him, as he has written to him."

In the year 1829, Daniel O'Connell, then at the height of his popularity in Ireland, with an inconsistency not uncommon to the professors of his creed,—his religious bigotry overcoming his political convictions,—attacked the liberal party in France, in a letter to the *Dublin Evening Post*, in a most unjustifiable manner, describing them as enemies rather than friends to liberty, "ready to crouch again before the throne of the first gilded adventurer who would join with them in their one great passion—their hatred of Christianity:"—"all the liberty they wanted was the liberty to crush religion and to embrue their hands in the blood of the priests,"—a sweeping accusation more than once persisted in, merely because some conspicuous members of that party were not blindly devoted to the see of Rome. Mr. Armstrong addressed an admirable letter to the Editor of the *Examiner*, in which, after severely handling "Dan" for the gross discrepancies between his professions and his practice, he winds up with the following prophetic estimate of his character:

"If, however, Mr. O'Connell should persevere in the course which he has unfortunately too often chosen,—if, by a species of *accommodation* the most delusive, he should continue to divide himself between two masters as opposite as 'God and Mammon,'—he must abide by the consequences. In his own day, eventually, every man's hand will be against him; and History, when she notices him for the sake of the events in which he was conspicuously mixed, will lament that when his country and his kind had hoped for a patriot, this 'man of the people' was found too narrow-minded by education, and too imbecile by religion, to come up to the measure of their wants; that the cause of the good and wise of all nations, so far as his influence could reach, was retarded by the prejudices he strengthened and the fallacies he propagated; that patriotism was wounded by his calumnies, philosophy attacked by his bigotry, and charity appalled by his virulence; and finally, instead of taking that station in the scroll of his country's fame which the circumstances in which he was placed might not have rendered an impossible elevation, he was contented to live for the applauses of a mob and the flattery of a

faction, and to barter the renown of a Hampden, a Romilly and a Bentham, for the ignoble notoriety of a Lilburne or a Cobbett!"

At the close of the year 1829, Mr. Armstrong thus writes of himself :

"Adhering still to the maxim, more praised than followed by Gibbon, who takes it, I think, from Cicero, 'Multum legere potius quam multa,' my studies have not within any recent period introduced me to the knowledge of many new books.

"I have lately amused myself in re-perusing some favourite articles in the Westminster Review, a periodical which I cannot better describe than in the words of its very able editor, Mr. Bowring, of London, from whom I had the pleasure not long since of receiving a very obliging letter :

"'It is not for me to estimate the value of the service which the Westminster Review may have done for free inquiry ; but sure I am it has sought to do good service. Unsupported by the aristocracy, by the bookselling influence, by any monopoly or faction whatever,—flattering no one, but endeavouring to maintain no unsound opinions of any one,—it has, I think, some claim upon public patronage.'

"In the 4th No. of this truly independent and useful work, the commencing article is devoted to an explanation of the principles of political economy, taking for its text Mr. Mill's elementary work on that subject. The science of politics has unquestionably an advantage, not easily to be estimated, in the great talents and enlightened mind of this eminent writer. . . . This school has been scoffingly, but in my opinion honourably and fitly, termed the Utilitarian. . . . But in admitting the propriety of the term, it is by no means necessary to limit the signification of the word 'Utility' to the narrow sense in which its inventors would affect to understand it.

"In interpreting the designs of these enlightened men of whom we speak, their enemies endeavour to make the world believe that they are actuated by more than Gothic barbarity ; and that, if legislation were to be influenced *by them*, every species of refinement would in no long time be subverted. . . . The



Utilitarian philosophy opposes itself to nothing which can really tend to benefit and adorn society: it protests only against that abuse of education which, even when most successful, enables the youth of our country to determine on the merits of a poem, or the antiquity of a MS., or the site of some scene of historical fame, while they are contentedly ignorant to the last degree on every subject which it concerns men *in active and useful life* to understand;—ignorant of the principles of law, jurisprudence, government;—ignorant of all the phenomena of nature—of botany, chemistry, mineralogy, geology;—in short, as much fit to participate, as numbers of them are destined to do, in the guidance of national affairs, and the suggestion of measures which influence the happiness of millions, living and unborn, of their fellow-beings at home and abroad, as the most uneducated of their own menials! Bigots and imbeciles, what but the *pressure of opinion from without* could save their country from the consequence of their inanities! If there were no illustrious writers, no sagacious observers, no enlarged and liberal bosoms anxious and busy in the work of doing good to their race, and aided and sustained by the all-subduing energies of the Press, what could be hoped from the scions whom our Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and Dublin annually emit from their halls?

“From Ascendancy-men in Ireland, from High-churchmen in England, from intolerance anywhere in whatever form or degree, may the Bentham and the Mills, the Ricardos and Maccullochs, with their Mechanics’ Institutes, their London University, and all their *utilitarian* expedients in their train, increase and multiply, and from year to year, in the great mercy of Heaven, grow more and more powerful to protect us!”

In 1830, there was a contested election for Drogheda, when Mr. Armstrong made a most remarkable and telling speech in favour of the Reform candidate. A long extract is quoted in the London Examiner of May 22, and is thus introduced: “The following passage is extracted from a masterly speech of the Rev. George Armstrong at the Drogheda election. When submitting this specimen, we need scarcely say the speaker is a

man of sound principles and great abilities. We wish there were a few more such to take a part—a lead it would be—in Irish affairs.” The extract, too long to repeat here, is a capital specimen of hustings’ oratory, full of clever passages and humorous illustrations, constantly interrupted by “laughter and cheers” from his hearers.

In this same journal, Mr. Armstrong contributed some admirable papers towards the end of the year on the Reform Debates in the House of Lords, in which he analyzed and answered all the speeches of the opposing Members with a great deal of wit and power.

He was a warm advocate for Catholic Emancipation, and one of the few Protestants of his neighbourhood who signed a petition in favour of that measure. In page 3 of the second edition of “Infallibility not possible,” there is a note referring to this petition, with a letter of the Duke of Sussex, to whose care it was committed.

In the year 1831, he published a very able little volume\* on the Established Church, in answer to a Charge of Archbishop Magee, which attracted a great deal of notice at the time.

Thus usefully and worthily did he continue to pass his time, invigorating his mind by study, and employing his voice and pen in the defence of freedom, progress and truth, in the political, social and religious questions of the day.

Among Mr. Armstrong’s registered thoughts and feelings during the year 1833, there again occur several allusions to Dr. Channing’s works, which seem to have been his constant companions, and to have ultimately completed his conversion to a form of Christianity which his mind had already adopted as the logical deduction from the writings of the New Testament, by shewing how fitted it was to exalt the soul, to deepen devotion, and satisfy the spiritual cravings of the heart.

On “Wednesday, July 3,” he writes: “Dr. Channing—

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\* The Church, its Civil Establishment indefensible, and its Claims to a Tolerant Character disproved. London—R. Hunter. 1831.

finished (second time) his volume of 'Discourses.' Bless the Lord, O my soul—all that is within me, bless the Lord—for his unbounded goodness in setting before me such glorious views of the religion of His Son! O what a host has Unitarian light and purity in this most gifted and most holy of its emissaries!"

During the autumn of this year (1833), he was much occupied in writing an essay, entitled "Euthanasia of the British Constitution," which appeared in the October number of Tait's Magazine. On the Christmas-day following, he thus records his final acceptance, as it were, of a faith which was henceforth his consolation and support under all life's trials, and whose defence, illustration and promotion, eventually became his chief business and delight:

"Wednesday, December 25.—One of the most exquisite days ever beheld at this time of the year, the first on which Mrs. A. went out since her illness. Lord, how manifold are thy mercies! Happy in the enjoyment of this lovely day:—how much *more* happy within, when praying and reading with——and her recovered mother, under the influence of Unitarian feelings, and *for the first time* accepting and dispensing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the form of the Revised Book of Common Prayer! Closed this delightful service by a discourse of Dr. Channing on 'Knowing Christ, Ephes. vi. 24;' and in the fulness of my heart began a letter to this dear and noble apostle of unspotted and sublime Christianity."

How interesting and touching is this passage! And now that we can read it by the light of the writer's subsequent career, how we must honour the sincerity and respect the convictions of this confessor, who spent his last and best days in the advocacy of views of Christ's truth reached by a method so philosophical, and embraced by a faith so deeply spiritual!

A remarkable episode in Mr. Armstrong's life was his correspondence with the late Blanco White. It seems to have commenced in the year 1828, by Mr. Armstrong's sending a copy of his "Infallibility not possible" to Mr. White, then at Oxford, and to have been resumed in 1831, by what Mr. W. calls "an

eloquent and ably written defence" of him by Mr. Armstrong against some violent and unjustifiable attacks of the Roman Catholic press. In Mr. White's letter of thanks for this generous interference, he thus alludes to Mr. Armstrong's retirement from the Church of England :

"I cannot but respect your motives, evinced, as they appear, by a sacrifice of temporal interest; though I sincerely lament the separation of one who, though known to me only in writing, has a claim on my respect and gratitude. But every mind has its own appropriate trial. Our theological inferences and conclusions are very different, yet our desire of following truth, and nothing but truth, I trust will excuse whichever of us may be in error."\*

The sequel of this correspondence is curious, and alike creditable to both parties.

In 1834, Mr. White, in the meantime removed to Dublin to take up his residence in the family of Archbishop Whately, renewed his intercourse with Mr. Armstrong by a letter and a present of two little works written by him with the view "of conciliating Christians (who are worthy of that name) on points where human language cannot convey any definite notion, and is constantly exposed to contradict itself."† In fact, as Mr. White says somewhere else, his object was, from the regard with which Mr. Armstrong had inspired him, "to turn him from the error of his ways, and reconcile him to the Established Church."

Mr. Armstrong replied in due course to this communication; and his letters are so elaborate and eloquent a defence of his views, and so interesting a picture of his mind at this period, that it appears worth while to quote them at full length.

"Kilsharvan, August 4, 1834.

"My dear Sir,—If I have not at an earlier period replied to your letter of May 1st, accompanied by some of your very interesting publications,—which I duly received at this place,—it

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\* See Life of Blanco White, by Rev. J. H. Thom, Vol. I. pp. 446, 476.

† Ibid. Vol. II. p. 41.

was that I might afford myself the opportunity, after my release from some pressing occupations, of ascertaining, by an attentive perusal of those works, the full extent of the favour you had done me by offering them for my acceptance.

“ I had not been aware, until you informed me yourself of the fact, of your residence in this country ; and I take pleasure in believing that, so far as your health may permit, your present situation affords you facilities, which will not be thrown away, for contributing still further to our not very ample stock of pure and polished composition and bold and liberal theology.

“ In reviewing all that I have hitherto learned of your character and your writings, while I see the evidence of attainments which far remove you from anything like a comparison with so humble an individual as myself, yet I can trace between your situation and my own, and between—I will not say our actual opinions, but our intellectual tendencies and habits, a resemblance so broad and strongly marked, that I cannot but avail myself with satisfaction of any opportunity that presents itself for strengthening an intercourse of minds which would seem to be connected by so close and peculiar an affinity. Often, when I have read that thought of the incomparable Locke on the subject of theology—‘ This is that science which would truly enlarge men’s minds, were it studied, or permitted to be studied, every where with that freedom, love of truth and charity, which it teaches,’—it has occurred to me, how delightful a circumstance it would be for one mind thus disposed to meet with another of like complexion. Yet how rarely could such a coincidence be expected to happen ! And here I am reminded of the sentiment of a writer, with whose imperishable pages I trust you are more than superficially acquainted,—I mean Dr. Channing. That great writer has remarked, that ‘ the claims of religion on intelligent men are not yet understood, and the low place which it holds among the objects of liberal inquiry will one day be recollected as the shame of our age.’ It is wonderful that any mind, and especially a superior one, should not see in religion the highest object of thought. It is wonderful that the infinite God, the noblest theme of the universe, should be considered as a mono-

poly of professed theologians; that a subject so vast, awful and exalting, as our relation to the Divinity, should be left to *technical men*, to be handled so much for sectarian purposes.'

"Accordingly, of the two great divisions of society, laymen, alas! like Gallic, seem but little disposed 'to care for these things,' and, with either the carelessness of sceptics or the implicitness of papists, are contented to delegate to the 'parsons' the whole care and concern of religion. Yet who of the 'parsons' ever thinks of resolutely and in good earnest *examining*? Or if, here and there, one such may be found, by what extravagance of imagination could he hope to meet with such another as himself? How, indeed, can it be otherwise, seeing that the very essence of their profession is first to take up 'opinions,' as Locke again expresses it, 'which best comport with their power, profit or credit, and *then* to seek arguments to support them'? Which one, out of a thousand of them, when once he has entered his profession, can truly say with Cicero, '*Integra nobis est judicandi potestas; neque ut omnia quæ præscripta et quasi imperata sunt, defendamus, necessitate ulla cogimur*'? Nay, rather, of which one among them may it not far more truly be said, '*Infirmissimo tempore relatis, de rebus incognitis judicat, et ad quamcunque disciplinam, quasi tempestate delatus ad eam tanquam ad saxum adhærescit*'? †

"With all such persons, therefore, any attempt at religious conversation or discussion, with a view to mutual improvement and the single-minded interchange of truth, must be a visionary and hopeless thing. But do I erroneously believe that far different must be the case when a mind, disgusted with the imposition of intolerant and complicated creeds and articles, and at length resolved—*coute qu'il coute*—to think for itself, chances upon inter-

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\* We have a full and perfect power of judging for ourselves, nor are we under any necessity of defending every opinion that has come down to us, as if it were authoritatively prescribed and enjoined.

† At the most inexperienced period of their lives, they presume to determine upon matters completely unknown to them; and to whatever system, as if at the mercy of a tempest, they happen originally to be carried, to that, as it were to a rock, they ever after tenaciously adhere.

course with another mind, even far more painfully wounded and not less resolutely bent upon exercising its rare endowments in the prosecution of the noblest of all subjects of inquiry—religious truth?

“Both you, Sir, and I have been repelled from the creeds of our youth. And fortunately for the hopes I have formed, in one other particular there is a circumstance we partake of in common. In ‘casting away the cords from us’ of one form of bondage, we have not entangled ourselves with those of another. The temptations of interest, for you as for me, have lost their power to impede our march. And though your lot is apparently cast among those (estimable and honoured as they are) whose condition is comparatively one of restraint, yet you appear to me to have too strongly evinced the temper of your mind, and too ardently breathed the passion for intellectual independence that sways it, for any danger to assail you from such a contact, or for any ecclesiastical *system* whatever to claim you for its own.

“May I then rejoice in regarding you as one (almost the only one I have met with in life) who, full of information, is ready to impart it—full of candour, is ready to extend it—exempted from every secular bias, and furnished with all heavenward affections, so far as the frailty of our nature will admit, puts nothing in competition with truth, and only values truth itself for the happiness and holiness it conduces to bring us while here, and as fitting our souls for a fuller, freer, purer communion with the everlasting Fountain and Father of Truth, when, by his mercy in Jesus Christ, we shall have been ‘translated into the kingdom of his dear Son’?

“I feel anxious to observe that, in more than one communication with which I have been favoured by you, I have found cause for surprise at the certainty with which you have assumed that my sentiments were those of decided Unitarianism. In the course of the very little that I have ventured to publish, I can hardly think I have expressed—certainly I nowhere intended—a sentiment which could be strictly construed to bear that sense. My single object throughout has been to defend such sentiments, in reference to the ecclesiastical complexion of my own times, as

had already brought down with honour to posterity the immortal names of Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor and Locke.

“It was at no time my object to controvert opinions, but only the *spirit* in which opinions were maintained by churches, sects and parties, and by none with more distinguished intolerance of pretension, or pretensions to intolerance, than the Church by law established in these countries. Every where and always, indeed, I have claimed for Unitarians the title of Christian; since otherwise the world would have to unchristianize such men as Milton, Lardner and Price; and I could see no interval between such a proceeding and the nearest route to Rome. But nowhere that I can recollect have I designated myself, or left it by unavoidable implication for others to designate me, by the title of Unitarian.

“If, indeed, the advocacy of such views as I have espoused constitute a Unitarian, then, in common with every Protestant who argues consistently from his own principles, I could not have shrunk from a name which would only have been synonymous with that of Protestant. But until this identity was no longer to be questioned, I must take leave to suggest that the fixing upon me of the name of Unitarian was not logically warranted, and was consequently premature.

“Nevertheless, *now* that a fitting opportunity invites the declaration (although, as a free inquirer into Christian truth, I could wish it were possible to avoid the *fixity* of any particular name), I have no hesitation in avowing to you, that from the doctrine of the Trinity, as defined and maintained in the articles and formularies of the Church of England, I do, in my present position of mind, *most completely recoil*. In reference, however, to the preceding remarks, I will own to you, I am not unprepared to concede that the advocacy of free and fearless inquiry in matters of religion does—it did so certainly with me—strongly dispose to a favourable consideration of the most comprehensive, that is to say the most simple, form in which Christianity can present itself; and this I believe is that form to which the name of Unitarian is commonly affixed. If to claim for Unitarianism the character of Christian, import that Christianity may consist



with that form of belief,—and if *to be Christian* imply a desire to be governed by the laws, to cultivate the hopes, and to profit by the aids, which Christ, on the authority of God, has promulged,—it seems difficult to understand why that system (call it what you will) which, rejecting all other additions, *comprehends these several requisites*, should not be entitled to the acceptance—nay, to the open *preference*—of every rational and sober mind.

“ Much did I rejoice to find this truth emphatically declared in various passages and in various phrase in the course of your interesting ‘Travels.’ I allude especially to pp. 73, 74 and 130, in your second volume. Now if, in the former, it be true that the particulars you there set forth must constitute ‘*that faith* which Christ demands in his disciples;’ and if, in the latter, it be no less truly declared of matter substantially the same, that ‘*this and nothing else is pure Christianity*,’—I protest I am utterly unable to discern, not alone wherein can consist the value, but what effort of ingenuity can sustain the credibility of any other *additions* whatsoever. An expression occurs at pp. 137, 138 of Vol. I., in the propriety of which I so entirely concur, that my only wonder is how men of thought can ever have suffered their minds to wander into systems so much the opposite of that to which their understanding and their heart inevitably revert, the instant the pressure of *controversy* is withdrawn, or whenever the habitual submission which education and society impose happens for a moment to be eluded. The expression I refer to is this—‘The *extreme simplicity and reasonableness*’ of Christianity. I acknowledge both the one and the other; and were it not for these, I candidly own to you, I could not be a Christian. Seeing, then, the marked precision with which, in so many instances, you speak of rational Christianity—observing, too, with admiration, the reach of mind and the cultivated powers you bring to the investigation of religion, I can the less account for certain other expressions which escape you, and for the general conclusions on the subject in which you seem to have hitherto rested. One or two instances of these I will now take the liberty of selecting.

“The first shall be one which arrested my attention so long ago as eight years. It occurs in the commencing letter of your masterly ‘Evidence against Catholicism,’ where you say that ‘in length of time, Christianity in the light of Unitarianism appeared to me a mighty work to little purpose.’ On reading these words, I immediately took down the volume of Paley’s Moral Philosophy containing the celebrated chapter on ‘Reverencing the Deity,’ at the conclusion of which the following sublime and affecting passage convinced me that there was no real foundation for the conclusion at which you had arrived:— ‘There is a class of reasoners who can see *little* in Christianity, even supposing it to be true. To such adversaries we address this reflection: Had Jesus Christ delivered no other declaration than the following—‘The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation’—he had pronounced a message of inestimable importance, and *well worthy of that splendid apparatus of prophecy and miracles* with which his mission was introduced and attested; a message in which the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an answer to their doubts and rest to their inquiries,’ &c. &c.

“I felt then, and still feel, my dear Sir, that this ‘answer’ and this ‘rest,’ in all their force and blessedness, belong to the creed of the Unitarian; and it did indeed seem inexplicable why it was that you could have ‘lost all hope,’ as you express it, of thereby ‘quieting your mind.’ To any person less strongly impressed than you with the ‘extreme simplicity and reasonableness’ of Christianity, I could have easily understood how a doctrine so entirely divested of mystery, so directly ‘coming home to the business and the bosoms’ of mankind, might have appeared comparatively unattractive and uninteresting; and I know not how we could more forcibly or happily picture the appetite of believers in general for exaggeration and complexity, than in the following words of Professor Brown, which I have long noted down as singularly applicable to the subject in hand: ‘Such is the strange nature of man,’ says that profound writer, ‘that the

with that form of belief,—and if *to be Christian* implied to be governed by the laws, to cultivate the hopes, and by the aids, which Christ, on the authority of God, mulged,—it seems difficult to understand why that system (what you will) which, rejecting all other additions, *claims these several requisites*, should not be entitled to acceptance—nay, to the open *preference*—of every rational sober mind.

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simplicity of truth, which might seem to be its essential charm, and which renders it doubly valuable in relation to the weakness of his faculties, is the very circumstance that renders it least attractive to him; and though, in his analysis of everything that is compound in matter or involved in thought, he constantly flatters himself that it is this very simplicity which he loves and seeks, he yet, when he arrives at absolute simplicity, feels an equal tendency to turn away from it, and gladly prefers to it anything that is more mysterious, merely because it is mysterious. I am persuaded, said one who knew our nature well,\* that if the majority of mankind could be made to see the order of the universe such as it is, as they would not remark in it any virtues attached to certain numbers, nor any properties inherent in certain planets, nor fatalities in certain times and revolutions of these, they would not be able to restrain themselves, on the sight of this admirable regularity and beauty, from crying out with astonishment, *What! is this all?*

“Forgive me for saying that, when I place this passage in juxtaposition with the conclusion in your volume to which I have referred, I see a parallelism in the cases which contributes not a little to relieve me from any misgiving I might have felt as to the soundness of the views in which my own meditations have resulted.

“You probably remember the humorous illustration of Selden in describing the same fact:—‘We love a man that damns us, and we run after him again to save us. If a man had a sore leg, and he should go to an honest, judicious surgeon, and he should only bid him to keep it warm and anoint with such an oil, an oil well known, that would do the cure, haply he would not much regard him, because he knows the medicine beforehand an ordinary medicine. But if he should go to a surgeon that would tell him, Your leg will gangrene within three days, and it must be cut off, and you will die unless you do something that I could tell you,—what listening there would be to this man!’ &c.

“Assuredly, I would not be thought to trifle on so momentous

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\* Fontenelle.

a subject, or to undervalue the anxiety with which any human being should apply himself, on grounds of probability satisfactory to himself, to the cure of the spiritual pangs under which he may be languishing. But when a remedy is offered and *rejected*,—more especially when principles are upheld which had seemed to invite the application and anticipate the efficiency of the remedy so rejected,—some indulgence may be hoped for the curiosity which seeks an explanation of the fact, and some sympathy awakened towards a mind whose hopes and convictions, it had thought, were solidly founded on principles which yet would appear to be the basis of such opposite conclusions!

“In your letter of May 1st, which I shall ever value for its eloquent and touching expression of all that is essential and precious in the Christian faith, you have prayed for the day to come, ‘when, whatever may be the difference of what may be called the *technical* language of theology, all who believe in God, the Father of Christ, all who love God in Christ, all who trust for life and eternity in God through Christ, will recognize each other as heirs of salvation.’ Oh! Sir, these are indeed the words of eternal truth! But how, alas! are we ever to hope for this day, when even men of pure and upright souls and exalted intellects—men who, walking themselves in light, must know the influence which language has over the ideas of the many—nevertheless contribute the sanction of their example in retaining this language, and in thereby protracting to a hopeless distance the day when men, forgetting the unessentials in which they had been taught to differ, and abjuring the divisions into which a vicious use of language had betrayed them, might at length begin to see and pursue the things which truly belong to their peace?

“Vainly, indeed, do we hope,—idly, alas! do we pray, for the creed-ridden multitude to forbear from uncharitable judgments, and to discern the absurdity no less than the mischief of attaching importance to the barbarous niceties and theological freaks of *orthodox* emperors, popes and fathers—and you have well shewn what sort of a thing this *orthodoxy* was—when so luminous and revered a guide as the present Metropolitan of Dublin has not been *shocked* at giving the dignity of his name

and the implication of his approval to such a document as the pseudo-Athanasian Creed, or even to the weekly recital of the less odious, indeed, but scarcely more intelligible or edifying, dogmas of the gentle Fathers of Nice!

"But there is an expression in your letter, which, as it has reference to yourself, I am much more interested in clearly understanding—I mean the words, '*the side to which I belong.*' Now really, if I might judge from the character of your remarks, as well in your letter to me, as more fully still in your printed works, 'the side' on which I should expect to find you would be *that* which *least departs*, instead of that which deviates most, from the just and excellent principles you lay down. Remember, I pray you, that 'the side' to which you lead me to infer 'you belong,' will not acknowledge what *you* truly declare to be '*that faith* which Christ demands of his disciples,' to be any such thing. Be it ever so 'sincere,' it is not the right faith, it is not a saving faith, unless it include a belief in three separate Persons, *each by itself* true and perfect God. Remember, I entreat, that 'the side' to which you would seem to 'belong,' will not hear of that mutilated faith of which you affirm—incontrovertibly in my opinion—that such, '*and nothing else*, is pure Christianity.' Oh no! they require you to say that, though the Son is *of the Father*, while the Father is *of none*; yet in this aforementioned triad, '*none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another*;' and that unless you acknowledge all this, '*without doubt you shall perish everlastingly*,'—or, as it is equivalently phrased at the conclusion of the horrible formula referred to, you are doomed to *everlasting fire*.

"So much for the side to which you 'belong.' Now let us weigh in the opposite scale the sentiments which prevail, and the 'definitions' which are received, on the side to which I am to suppose you do *not* belong. In the first place, then, if it be correct to say that the faith which you have described is '*that which Christ demands of his disciples*,'—and that such, and '*nothing else, is pure Christianity*,'—I am warranted in contending that no other known sect in Christendom so closely approaches to your own acceptance of Christianity as do the Unitarians.

In every one of those beautiful and soul-moving sentiments you express, I believe I can affirm safely that every Unitarian breathing could cordially and joyously concur. Is this nothing in their favour? But further, is it nothing that, seeing with you the 'extreme simplicity and reasonableness' of Christianity,—or similarly seeing, with Jeremy Taylor, that 'those creeds are best which keep to the very words of Scripture, and that faith the best which has most simplicity,'—they decline to encumber their faith with human expositions, giving a reason of the hope that is in them in the identical words of Holy Writ, and maintaining at once the supremacy of Scripture and the liberty of inquiry by forbearing to impose, as tests of Christianity, the *deductions* of one age or the implicit acquiescence of another?

"But I must not forget that you object to Unitarianism the *definiteness* of its denials on the one hand, and of its *assertions* on the other. Now I ask, with all possible humility and self-distrust, is it too much of definiteness of denial to say in reference to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, 'This is life eternal, to know *Thee, the only* true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent'? Or again, that 'To us there is but one God, *the Father*; and one Lord, Jesus Christ'? If, upon intimations so *express* as these, we are led into the error of denying that, to any other being or portion of a being in the universe, save and except the Father alone, can the appellation of God, in its highest and most absolute sense, be lawfully given, at least we might hope that the *negation* which contents itself with 'the very words of Scripture' would escape the imputation of *over-assurance*. And now one word for our definiteness of *assertion*.

"It is indeed true, we have a notion that, ever since the promulgation of the gospel, were Christians only a little less bent upon puzzling themselves, they might without much difficulty know '*what* it is they worship.' To us the case seems amazingly simple. For example: the Being whom the Athenians had ignorantly worshipped, St. Paul, in a manner the most unequivocal, undertook to 'declare to them.' Now it was this *same* Being, whom Paul *after*, as well as before his conversion, continued to worship as the one unchangeable 'God of his (Jewish) fathers.'

While, in fine, the peculiar title of that God, and the relation in which He stood to Jesus Christ, is further ascertained by the words of our Lord himself—‘It is my *Father*—of whom ye say that He is your God.’ By the infinite goodness of God, then, we do say, however it may be with others, that Unitarians ‘know what and whom they worship,’ acknowledging with all ‘*definiteness of assertion*’ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and *Father* of all, *who is above all*, and through all, and in us all, and in their literal acceptation of these words, consistently maintaining—arbitrary punctuation apart—that Romans ix. 5 must be construed by this in Ephesians, and not this by Rom. ix. 5.

“With a force irresistible by everything but the inveterate prejudice of a mind destroyed by education, you have demonstrated the absurdity of supposing that any additions to the simple Christianity of the Scriptures can add to the *safety* of the believer; and that, having arrived at the safe, it is preposterous to trouble ourselves about the *safer*. Nothing can be more true than this. You then go on to say, ‘I know that prayer to God through Christ is *safe*.’ And here, again, there can be no difference of opinion. I wish, dear Sir, I could go on to approve; but, alas! I fear you next proceed in search of the *safer*; for I find you next observing, ‘I know that to consider Christ as the true and living image of the Father, and to *worship him* as such, is *safe*.’ Now, taking this term, as before, to import religious adoration, is this, I pray you to consider, *quite* so safe as is here assumed?

“‘It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, *and him only*—not his image, but himself—shalt thou serve.’ ‘After this manner pray ye, *Our Father*, who art in heaven.’ ‘The hour cometh when the true worshipers shall worship’—whom? The Son? No. The Holy Ghost? No. Both these inclusive? No such thing; but the *true* worshipers shall worship the *Father*. ‘In that day ye shall ask me nothing; whatsoever ye shall ask the *Father* in my name, he will give it to you.’ ‘Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the *Father* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the *Father* by him.’



Are not these explicit directions for prayer? Will it not be *safe* to comply with them? And shall we be warranted in concluding that we should be *safer* still in the belief that there are blessings which the Father, thus addressed, either will not or cannot grant; and that some object of prayer, other than the Father, or supplementary to him, is requisite to supply us with those things which he is wanting either in the power or the will to bestow? Never can I think of these things without being lost in astonishment at how much the Christian world has yet to learn, or rather to *unlearn*. If, however, it be said—for what will not orthodoxy in its shifts be tempted to say?—that God the Son is addressed as a being the *same* with God the Father, then—waiving the rather curious question how he can *actually be the same* with that God and Father at whose right hand he is represented as sitting—we ask, why use a name which either imports a *difference*, or degenerates into a word without an idea?

“ Besides, where all this time is that portion of devotion which ought to be allotted to the third Person of the Trinity? I believe, in the entire Liturgy of the Church of England, there is but one solitary direct address to the Holy Ghost, and that in a mere versicle at the commencement of the Litany. Is this a fair apportionment? Or does it argue that the common sense even of the half-reformed compilers of our Liturgy revolted at the thought of presenting to the attention of worshipers this super-numerary claimant to their homage so often as the consistency of their doctrine would have required? In the adjustment of the devotions to the other two Persons, doubtless there was found to be sufficient perplexity, without the superadded distraction of a *third*,—a circumstance which may easily be believed by any one who observes the very arbitrary distribution which obtains in the several divisions of our public devotional service. With scarcely an exception, the whole of the morning and evening prayer is directed to *the Father alone*: take, for example, the form of confession in each. Now are these *imperfect* forms of prayer? or were their deficiencies designed to be *made up* by the exuberant devotion to the Son—in his character, too, of a human being—witness the lavish allusions, in such exquisitely

Popish taste, to his bodily sufferings on the cross—in that totally distinct service, the Litany? These, dear Sir, are serious questions, and might make one pause in admitting the wisdom or the scriptural influence that prevailed in the arrangement and conception—doctrinally regarded—of these strange compositions.

“For my own part, I never can think of the doctrine to which these observations apply, without thinking too of the detestable ages in which it grew and strengthened. I see the darkest passions of the darkest era in the history of man arrayed in its construction; I trace its progress to maturity through scenes at which memory sickens; and I mark the reluctant spirit with which the mitigated bigotry of an era comparatively enlightened, resigns the victim it may no longer lay its guilty hands on. Concurrently with this, or rather in proportion as we recede from the period when a scowling priesthood sat like an incubus on the soul of man, I see too the efforts of the mind, whenever it could baffle this dreaded power, to soar into its native light, and embrace a system of belief ‘in harmony,’ as the admirable Channing would express it, ‘with the whole of our inward nature,’—a system in which the intellect and the affections can look with equal favour, and which, without shocking the reason, can stimulate and sustain our purest aspirations after the world of spirits. In a word, exactly in proportion as circumstances have favoured the free development of mind, whether in respect to individuals or communities, I have observed from the earliest period of the Reformation down to the present time, in America as in Europe, a disposition to revert to and maintain ‘the simplicity and reasonableness of Christianity’ in that perfection which, in tones of such deep and genuine piety, you justly and feelingly ascribe to it.

“I know not whether to wish that this letter had been one with less of controversy. At any rate, on looking over the several communications with which you have honoured me, and recollecting, so far as I can, the tenor of mine to you, I feel that I have not invited, while I no less feel that I ought not to have declined, the discussion into which I trust I have not been offensively betrayed. Much indeed should I be mortified, were

the effect of anything I have written here to be other than a desire in you to reciprocate the offer of a calm and kindly interchange of opinion on a subject of surpassing interest, but which has so rarely the fortune to be treated either with the temper suitable to its nature or the freedom befitting intelligent beings. I have already given expression to my sense of your peculiar adaptation to the office of cultivating and expounding religious truth. I can well understand the distinction, so happily pointed out by Archbishop Whately, between 'wishing to have truth on our side, and to be on the side of truth.' The latter, I am persuaded, is the condition of your mind; with the unusual advantage besides of having already overleaped the limits of your educational belief, without exposing yourself to the bias from secular interest which in so many instances must unconsciously influence the conclusions of others. Yet I will not pretend that there are not some important particulars, independently of those I have noticed in this letter, upon which my mind would gladly avail itself of further light, or has even taken up impressions not quite in unison with yours. It is the faculty of all vigorous minds to throw out materials by which other minds are sure to improve, whether they embrace or reject the conclusions into which those materials are moulded. My experience of this fact has not been weakened by my acquaintance with your valuable labours. But while I have hesitated as to some of the views you have either directly or incidentally defended, I willingly acknowledge that the information, the sentiment and the genius, with which your pages abound, have commanded for the far greater part, not alone my unreluctant assent, but my grateful and lasting admiration.

"With such a mind I own I should not lightly prize the privilege of holding intercourse. Yet, however inferior in power, conscious as I am of the equal integrity and the not unlike vicissitudes of my own, I may perhaps be permitted to hope that the pleasure and advantage might not altogether be confined to me.

"I have for some time been residing in the family of my brother; but although I have at present no house of my own, yet I have

so far a *home*, that I can with pleasure assure you of a respectful and hearty greeting, if I might venture to solicit, and should be so fortunate as to obtain, from you the favour of your personal presence among us for a few days. We are in the neighbourhood here of some interesting and charming scenes—not being very far from the banks of the Boyne—to which it would indeed rejoice me to have the opportunity of being your guide; and being only twenty miles from town, I almost allow myself to anticipate the kindness of your favourable reply.

“In the meantime and always, believe me to be,” &c.

Mr. Blanco White's two acknowledgments of this letter will be found in his *Life*, Vol. II. pp. 48, 49. He excuses himself, “on account of the difficulty of getting a frank, and still more the state of his health,” from giving a detailed answer to all the observations which might seem to require it. “I must content myself,” he adds, “with giving this proof that your letter has deeply engaged my attention.” As the letters have been published and are so easily accessible, it is not necessary to quote them here; but the concluding observations of the second being more particularly referred to in Mr. Armstrong's answer which is to follow, it may be convenient to extract them:

“I believe that, if I were twenty years younger, I should be very much inclined to open a chapel of my own, and avoid the giving it any *denomination* besides that of *Christian*. . . . . Whatever powers are left me, I am, however, determined to employ in writing against the spirit of orthodoxy—that bane of the Christian Church, which began to corrupt it almost in the times of the apostles themselves. I cannot conclude without suggesting to you how desirable it would be that the ministers of the gospel called Unitarians should avoid *dogmatism*, or positive doctrines about the *mere humanity* of Christ, leaving the subject in the state in which it is unquestionably found in the Scriptures. I say *unquestionably*, though I imply a doubt which many Unitarians do not entertain, because it cannot be denied that to settle the question of the *nature* of Christ by setting texts against texts, is utterly impracticable in regard to the mass

of Christians. That Providence intended to leave the subject in that undefinable state, is to me a *fact* proved by the *balancing* tendency, if I may use the expression, which I observe in the New Testament. Why should we not leave it so? There is another point of the utmost importance to the progress of truly *liberal* Christian theology,—the acquiescence of Unitarians in the practice of worshiping the one God in Christ. This I conceive to be independent of the metaphysical question of the two natures. To me it is enough to hear Christ say that men should worship him as they worshiped the Father, and that he and his Father are one. I say that this is enough to justify the practice of addressing ourselves to God incarnate—by which I understand God united with Christ *in regard to us*, without defining the manner of the union. If to do this were unchristian, I cannot conceive that the Scriptures of the New Testament would leave such an opening to the practice. . . . .

“With earnest prayer for light from above to you and to me, and in the spirit of Christian fellowship, I remain, my dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

J. BLANCO WHITE.”

“*To the Rev. J. Blanco White, Archbishop of Dublin's, Stephen's Green.*

“Kilsharvan, Drogheda, Nov. 25—Dec. 1, 1834.

“My dear Sir,—At length, for very shame, I proceed to inform you that your truly acceptable and valuable letter of the 31st August arrived here during my absence from home; and much indeed do I wish that a far less interval had elapsed before I could conveniently apply myself to its consideration with the care it so deservedly required. Believe me, however, that I now avail myself of the earliest leisure I have had for rendering it such justice as my humble capability will admit, and for requesting your friendly and candid reception of the reflections it has given rise to in my mind.

“I may briefly premise that to the term ‘Unitarian,’ as applied to myself, I could at no time, since the change of my opinions, have the slightest objection—no more, indeed, than I could have to be called, at Constantinople, a Christian, even with the com-

plimentary appendage of 'dog' annexed to it. And I must declare that so far as a *reproach* should be intended, my respect for the person so applying the term 'Unitarian' would be not one whit more than for the poor unthinking utterer of the *orthodox slang* in fashion with the believers of the Prophet. The single dissatisfaction I designed to express in anything I may have conveyed to you was, that a work which aimed to be the common friend of all creeds, by preparing for each and all—more especially for such as were least in popular favour—an unprejudiced hearing, should be regarded, beyond this simple claim for a *hearing*, as Unitarian in its character, and consequently as a work which the orthodox, so to call them, were to view with suspicion, and the bigoted to pass by in alarm. But enough of this.

"I rejoice, however little I am surprised, that you have acquired so perfect an insight into the spirit of the ecclesiastical sayings and doings at present in so peculiar a state of activity as well in England as in Ireland. There is a passage in Hallam's History of England, reign of Anne, which I often refer to as marvellously descriptive of the majority of the order in our own day. 'The clergy,' he says, 'in very many instances were a curse rather than a blessing to those over whom they were set; and the people, while they trusted that from these polluted fountains they could draw the living waters of truth, became the dupes of *factionous lies and sophistries*.' It may be thought perhaps to be somewhat unfair to aim with so sweeping an application a censure which was only designed for the particular vices of a particular period. But, I must own, the difficulty to me is to find the period when the clergy, as a body, have *not* been 'a curse rather than a blessing to those over whom they were set;' and assuredly the difficulty is but slightly diminished on taking a review of their character as exhibited in these our own days. In short, I must frankly declare that in reference to that imposing majority, whether within or without the Establishment, who take to themselves the title of orthodox, I know of no other body of men in society to whom with so perfect propriety the epithets of hateful and mischievous can apply as to them. As an order of men professedly engaged in the prosecution of truth, the pro-

fligate disregard they evince to the *method* and temper in which alone truth can be successfully sought, and the vicious and unchristian spirit they manifest towards those who seek it in any other path but their own, expose them, in my humble judgment, to the charge of propagating and *loving falsehood*, in a degree incomparably beyond that of any other class of men in the history of the world.

“Feeling, then, as I do—believing that they have done more to ‘set kingdom against kingdom, neighbour against neighbour, family against family, and man against man,’—and that they are at this moment opposing greater obstacles to the progress and expansion of the human mind than all other causes put together, I am only consistent when I say that, Quaker-like, I incline to believe we should be infinite gainers were there no such profession in existence. The fact is, that in a free and civilized and generally educated community, it may reasonably be argued that a clergy *have no mission* to teach the truth. The truth is already at every man’s door, and he has only to stoop to lift it up; but if he wait for a gentleman in black, and with a university or episcopal licence, to tell him what truth is, the chances are ten to one he loses sight of truth altogether, and gets in its place some scheme handed down cut and dry from antiquity, and endorsed by the authority of the age, country or locality, in which the deluded inquirer may happen to be.

“When did a clergy ever forward the interests of truth? Never—and for this plain reason, that it is not truth, but *creeds*, they are concerned in sustaining. That is to say, although we disdain to abide by the chemistry, the astronomy, the jurisprudence, or the constitutional maxims of bygone days, yet in *theology*, as if it were of inferior importance to any of these, we set up a corporation of men notoriously *pledged* from the first dawn of their manhood, by their hopes of subsistence and advancement in the world, to see neither beyond nor beside—but to preach, to write and to scold in behalf of—the precise and particular number of dogmas which emanated from the half-emancipated intellects of certain old gentlemen in the 16th century! And here the eloquent words of the honoured Channing so for-

cibly suggest themselves, that I cannot forbear to advert to them. 'I see, indeed, superior minds and great minds among the adherents of the prevalent system; but they seem to me to move in chains, and to fulfil poorly their high function of adding to the wealth of the human intellect. In theological discussion, they remind me more of Samson grinding in the narrow mill of the Philistines, than of that undaunted champion achieving victories for God's people and enlarging the bounds of their inheritance.

"But after all, as I can very well imagine a clergy without an array of transmitted opinions imposed upon their acceptance, and through them recommended to the uninquiring acceptance of others, I could be well pleased to see such an order of men dispersed through society, who, by their leisure, their eloquence, their amiable bearing and their pure affections, should be able to draw men's minds from earth to heaven, and, professing less to be teachers of truth than preachers and examples of practical goodness, should ever be ready to aid in the inquiries of their brethren, casting away all pretension to dominion over their faith, and, in the work of interpreting God's revelations, contented to be helpers of their joy and fellow-seekers after knowledge, rather than a weight upon their souls and a hindrance to their path.

"Should it gratify me the less to behold such a system, that it would afford a promise of the extension of opinions, in whose train alone I can see the true happiness of society, the solid improvement of man, and a stability and wide-spreading growth for Christianity, for which the missions of orthodoxy have hitherto but dubiously provided either abroad or at home? I need not say to *you*, that wherever the incredible, the mysterious and the startling is most in vogue, *there* the reaction in favour of unbelief is of proportionate energy. The country of your birth is testimony of this, and I can confidently assure you that the country of your adoption abounds in examples of the analogous fact. I say the analogous fact, because I am not alluding to any effects upon the thinking mind from the existence of Popery—strictly such—in these countries. With *that* Popery, indeed, the intelligent and educated classes of Britain have no sympathy; but there is another Popery—a blind, unexamining, anti-rational



adhesion to creeds, which are scarcely, if at all, less shocking than Popery itself to understandings of the slightest capacity or taste for steady, persevering and independent thought. And just in proportion to the prevalence and popularity of these creeds in reference to one class of minds, is the progress of deep, subtle, sneering, total unbelief—less often avowed than betrayed—in others. This I well know, for I have personal experience of it; and there is indeed no fact of which I am more entirely persuaded, than that which has been expressed in the following words by Mr. Buckminster, a young American divine, who, too soon for the world, but not too soon for the happy immortality into which he was to pass, was cut off in the midst of a power and promise of which the records of genius and piety have but few examples. ‘Nothing,’ says that interesting writer, ‘so much tends to multiply hypocrites and infidels as the mysterious suppression or discouragement of all attempts to make religion intelligible. It may be set down as a maxim, that all the advantages which may at any time appear to be gained by making religion a passion and faith an unenlightened principle, are completely counterbalanced by the inevitable increase of hypocrisy, infidelity and bigotry, with which such a state of things is attended.

“As there is nothing true, striking or admirable, connected with religion, which has not been said by Channing in a manner in which no other man could say it, you will pardon me, I know, for again introducing him, for the sake of his awakening admonitions on the same subject :

“At the present day, one of the most urgent duties of the friends of Christianity, is to rescue it from the reproach of waging war with reason. The character of our age demands this; there have been times when Christianity, though loaded with unreasonable doctrines, retained its hold on men’s faith; for men had not learned to think. But that day is gone by, and the spirit of freedom which has succeeded it, is subjecting Christianity to a scrutiny more and more severe; and if this religion cannot vindicate itself to the reflecting, the calm, the wise, as a reasonable service, it cannot stand. Fanatical sects may for a time spread an intolerant excitement through a community, and impose silence

on the objections of the sceptical. But fanaticism is the epidemic of a season ; it wastes itself by its own violence ; sooner or later the voice of reflection will be heard. Men will ask, What are the claims of Christianity ? Does it bear the marks of truth ? And if it be found to war with nature and reason, it will be, and it ought to be, abandoned. On this ground, I am anxious that Christianity should be cleared from all human additions and corruptions. If indeed irrational doctrines belong to it, then I have no desire to separate them from it. I have no desire, for the sake of upholding the gospel, to wrap up and conceal, much less to deny, any of its real principles. Did I think it was burdened with one irrational doctrine, I would say so, and I would leave it, as I found it, with this millstone round its neck. But I know none such. I meet, indeed, some difficulties in the narrative part of the New Testament ; and there are arguments in the Epistles which, however suited to the Jews to whom they were addressed, are not apparently adapted to men at large ; but I see not a principle of the religion which my reason, calmly and impartially exercised, pronounces inconsistent with any great truth. I have the strongest conviction that Christianity is *reason in its most perfect form* ; and therefore I plead for its disengagement from the irrational additions with which it has been clogged for ages.'

" Entirely, earnestly, passionately, do my heart and soul respond to these thoughts ; and firmly do I believe that, without such efforts as the inestimable writer I have quoted suggests, in that concussion of opinions and shock of institutions which, it may be, the present, but assuredly the next generation is destined to witness over no small portion of the civilized earth, Christianity will be evil-entreated and denounced as a contributing cause of the degradation, oppression and cozening of the human race. But—I bless God for it!—these efforts are making.

" Within the last hundred years, independently of the earlier *heresy* of Poland, which has since found a flourishing home in Transylvania, a Reformation within a Reformation has begun ; and in the two most remarkable cities in the world for the growth and culture of the direful system of Calvin—Boston in America

and Geneva in Europe—singularly enough, too, the latter at the instance of our own Bishop Burnet—by the simple disuse of creeds, and the leaving of the clergy and laity to long familiarity with the silent, unperverted, *unarticled* teaching of Scripture itself, men's minds have happily emerged into a system of mercy, of reason and of freedom, which speaks cheeringly of the destined progress of the race in the same path.

“Let us do what we can, dear Sir, to hasten this progress, and to mingle our names in the honourable strife by which it is to be accomplished. You speak of an inclination, were you twenty years younger, to open a chapel of your own, to which you would give no other name but that of ‘Christian.’ I would to God your health and age were such, on the one hand, and our identity of sentiment so complete on the other, that I could offer to join myself heart and hand with you in such an enterprize! But I fear that, even were all things else to favour, some lingering incompatibility of opinion, however sincere our mutual desire to remove it, might still remain to render such a union of less easy attainment than we could wish.

“Referring now to the few observations which I find at the close of your last letter—and certainly it is full time to do so—I am not sure that I quite apprehend what you mean by the impracticability of settling the question as to the nature of Christ, especially, as you say, with regard to the mass of Christians, by setting ‘text against text.’ Perhaps I am to understand that the weight of merely textual evidence is *so even* on both sides as to render a decision by this means hopeless; and that thence it is you are struck by the ‘balancing tendency’ which Scripture appears to you to present on this great question.

“Now were I to grant—which indeed I do not—that any such ‘balancing’ is observable, I am at a loss to perceive why I am precluded, or why any human being is precluded, from seeking *for further light* beyond the limits of Scripture itself. Roman Catholics, you know, are accustomed to say that, in controverted questions, the Scriptures are mute and cannot decide—*In quibus incerta est victoria, aut par incertæ*;—and accordingly they betake themselves to the resource of an *infallible interpreter*.

But though Protestants professedly reject this expedient, they are not the less bound to look for some other. Let us then suppose, as Paley, embracing the concession of his adversary Hume, has observed with regard to the evidences of Christianity,—that it is ‘a contest of opposite improbabilities;’ that is to say, that it is improbable, from the evidence of Scripture, that a plurality of persons in the Godhead should exist, and *equally* improbable that it should *not* exist; let such be admitted to be the state of the case—and what then? Are we to let the matter rest there? that is to say, come to no conclusion at all?—or, with the instinctive but misdirected impulse of the Romanist, look about for some extrinsic and independent considerations which might enable us to turn the scale? It is thus that Paley has sought, and successfully, to establish the antecedent probability, or at least the credibility, of miracles; and precisely by the same process I can see with the most perfect distinctness that—even were the testimony of Scripture with regard to the nature of the Godhead as equiponderant as you state it to be—the light which is available from *other* sources, and the antecedent probabilities which present themselves, are abundantly sufficient to destroy the balance.

“Setting aside the innumerable absurdities, which have prevailed in all ages of the world, upon the nature and attributes of God, solely because men have *not* reasoned, or else have not reasoned sufficiently *far*,—what, let us ask, is the first conviction of a thinking mind, in this more cultivated age of the world, on turning its thought to the Deity? Why, plainly and palpably, the supremacy of that Being. There can be nothing else above him, or equal to him, in the universe; *nec quidquam viget simile aut secundum*; for otherwise it would have depended upon a mere chance whether there were order or confusion, collision or concurrence, in the works of creation! ‘Gods many or lords many,’ *one* must be *supreme*, if the impossibility of *counteraction* from any independent and co-ordinate will were a necessary condition to a creation of wisdom and order.

“Nor must it be forgotten—pardon me for writing thus to such a master in Israel as you—that were there *any other being*

of equal power, neither of them could be infinite; for there cannot be two infinities; infinity in either must exclude it in the other. Added to which, since of two independent and equal beings we might conceive either of them to exist *alone*, and since therefore it would be no contradiction to imagine the other *not to exist*, it would result that neither of them would be necessarily existent! And here we are in the jaws of Atheism—thanks to orthodoxy for bringing us there. But having no taste for the process by which such extremes meet, my heresy is content to tread a safer path, and with not a little wonder asks, having supremacy, infinity, and a necessarily existent, intelligent First Cause, by what *possibility* could the notion of *plurality* ever find its way into our conclusion?

“The truth is, considered in whatever point of view, we inevitably arrive at *unity*,—unity of essence, unity of power, unity of will; and of which unity we can have no other conception than such as we form when we ascribe it to ourselves or others. God is one precisely in the same sense that you or I are one; for if Scripture do not use language in the same sense that men use it, it speaks in an *unknown tongue*. There is a contemptible illustration employed in the Athanasian Creed, vastly convincing no doubt to the pious and passive believers who occasionally rejoice in its recital, that ‘as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.’ Unluckily it was forgotten in this brilliant attempt to *explain*, that the ‘flesh’ of our nature, as contradistinguished from its spiritual adjunct, does not think and act; whereas in the supposed duality of nature residing in Christ—for such is the corollary doctrine of the tri-personality of the Deity—each constituent, the man as well as the God, must think and act in its own appropriate manner.

“When we speak, then, of God being one, it must be as we understand the term one when applied to ourselves; which term one excludes from all share in our intelligent being—however numerous our *functions* may happen to be—everything but one sole, individual person or *conscious agent*. Nor will orthodoxy, as it appears to me, gain the slightest advantage, as contemplated by Archbishop Whately—see his *Logic*, art. Person—from the

nominalism of Wallis, any more than from the realism of Sherlock. For even were we to substitute 'manifestation' for person, and conceive of the Deity as revealing himself in a three-fold 'capacity,' rather than in a three-fold personality, there would still remain the incongruity—may I say the absurdity?—of supposing one of the capacities addressing itself and praying to another—one of them as sending, another as sent—and all as sustaining the functions of so many independent living, thinking, conscious beings. Just as if a Lord Chancellor of England, at once a Judge, a Speaker, and a Cabinet Minister, could be imagined in his character of Speaker to address himself to his other character of Judge; or that as Cabinet Minister he should be an emanation from the united volition and power of his other two capacities, and thereupon hold intercourse with these,—while yet he should operate, as some third intelligent 'somewhat,' in his own appropriate sphere, and with his own *independent, incommunicable consciousness!* Of so much use has been the illustration unwittingly furnished to Christian metaphysics by the orator of Rome—'Tres personas unas sustineo [meam, adversarii, judicis]'. But to carry the case a little further; let us suppose the aforesaid Lord Chancellor to delegate an agent with full power and authority to adjudicate on the case, and, if possible, to retrieve the affairs of some despairing suitor,—what should we think of the ingenious disputant who should insist that this agent was *co-substantial* with the source of his authority; and, after imposing some mystical name upon him—whether of 'manifestation,' or 'relation,' or 'capacity,' or 'person,' or 'somewhat'—should actually convert him into part and parcel of the very nature, instead of accepting him as the appointed, subordinate and obedient *minister*, of the high personage in whose beneficent work he was engaged?

"Need I pursue this further? 'Balance,' then, dear Sir, if you will, the internal probabilities of Scripture; but, despite of the mists which are sedulously interposed to obscure or extinguish it, *let in the light* which presses from without—aye, and from above too—that 'candle of the Lord in the breast of every man living, which the breath or power of authority cannot wholly

put out'—and the question will speedily be decided, your doubts will be dispelled, and unity, absolute unity, just such unity as constitutes in you or me our personal and conscious oneness, will be found to be demonstrably predicable of the Source of all being. But, after all, why this 'balancing'? Take away from the one scale the effect of the associations of early instruction, authority, books, conversation, friendship, fashion, with all the resulting hopes and fears, *earthly* and unearthly, which insensibly fetter even vigorous and original minds,—let us, at least, *make allowance* for these,—placing at the same time in the opposite scale the presumptions in favour of the 'reasonable and the simple,'—and will not this balancing be wonderfully changed?

"It has been said that Dr. Watts was frequently known to wish that the effect of a perusal of Scripture upon a mind entirely unimbued with the notions of Christendom one way or the other could be ascertained, and that such a test would go far to prove what the real doctrines of Scripture were. Now it so happens that we have recently had *precisely the test so required*, and we have seen in the example of the most remarkable genius of modern India—you will at once understand me to allude to the Rajah Rammohun Roy—the conclusions to which a truly impartial and intelligent investigation of Scripture would in every such trial, according to all probability, conduct. Give me leave, then, to ask, if this balancing be entitled to that character of 'fact' which you claim for it, could *such a fact* have escaped the observation of a person so unexceptionably qualified to detect it? 'Surely,' as that wonderful person himself remarked, 'the unbiassed judgment of one who has proceeded in the study of the sacred Scriptures with an anxious desire to discover the truth they contain, ought, as far as authority goes in such matters, to outweigh the opinions of any number who have either not thought at all for themselves, or have studied after prejudice had laid hold of their minds, and who must be always inclined, even after their reason has become matured, to interpret the sacred books in a manner favourable to their preconceived opinion. What fair inquiry respecting the doctrine of the Trinity can be expected from one who has been on the bosom of his mother constantly taught to

ask the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost?' 'Could Hindooism,' he asks, 'continue after the present generation, or bear the studious examination of a single year, if the belief of their idols being endued with animation were not carefully impressed on the young before they come to years of understanding?' So greatly, my dear Sir, in this, as in all other instances, must it depend on our previous habits of thought what weight we concede to or subtract from the evidences of any disputed opinion.

"There are states of mind in which any or every thing might appear to be 'balanced,' on consulting the naked testimony of Scripture. Time was when passive obedience was not even supposed to be balanced. It was palpably legible in every book of Holy Writ. And to this hour how many are to be found who, with the sage indecision of Sir Roger de Coverley, contend that 'much may be said on both sides' in reference to doctrines, practical and speculative, which the progress of humanity, a juster policy and a better criticism, are throwing into the shade? War, slavery, the punishment of death, coercion for religious opinion—in the social system; in theology, perhaps even still, what once was a favoured opinion, the eternal perdition of infants dying without baptism, even such as perish before birth,—but avowedly the purely arbitrary election of a very few to eternal bliss, and the no less arbitrary pre-ordained consignment of the infinite majority of the human race to the torments of hell-fire for ever; to which we may add, by way of relief, the gentler delusions, if not of transubstantiation itself, at least of the real presence in the Eucharist;—all these doctrines and practices have been presumed to repose on scriptural sanctions; and in the last case especially so even was the balancing once thought to be, that we have the remarkable confession of Luther, that on *that* point he could never find it in his heart to be altogether a Protestant: 'Je ne puis m'en degager, les paroles du texte sont trop fortes, ceci est mon corps, ceci est mon sang, et rien n'est capable de les oter de mon esprit.'

"I have been thus diffuse upon this passage of your letter, because I am most anxious that you should re-consider it, and



only assign its due value to what you claim as a fact, on considering the *counter-fact* I have furnished to you in the example of Rammohun Roy, independently of the rebutting evidence of which I myself am an instance; for assuredly as little am I convinced of the fact for which you would seem to contend. To speak in the language of inductive philosophy, experience proves it to be difficult to ascertain a fact, and perhaps what I have here taken the liberty of urging may incline you to see a fitting application of this truth in the matter in hand. Be this as it may, however, most devoutly can I declare that I see no balancing in the case.

“By the highest of all authorities I am told that ‘the only true God is the Father.’ How am I to get over this? By what text or congregation of texts shall I be able to balance it? But even granting that any words so explicit on the other side could be adduced, in what manner would divine *truth*—that blessing of which the scriptural symbol is *light*—in what manner would this truth, this light, be thereby promoted? Suppose it to be declared in so many words, beyond all possibility of doubt or question, ‘that the only true God is the Son,’ then see what must follow; either, first, the Father excludes the Son, or the Son excludes the Father; for there cannot be *two* only Gods; or, secondly, the Father and the Son are so absolutely one and the same, that whatever is predicable of the one must be equally so of the other; and so by a legitimate inversion we may say, that ‘to us there is but one God, Jesus Christ, and one Lord, the Father;’ nay more, that the Father is sent as well as the Son, and the Son the sender as well as the Father; or, to sum up all possible prodigies at once, that the Father is the Son, and the Son the Father! Is this, then, a beam of that *light* which emanates from the throne of the Eternal? Rather, is it not thick, palpable, soul-depressing darkness?

“I beseech you, then, dear Sir, to determine where these metaphysical, but strictly deducible, enormities are to end. For my part, I protest I know not, unless men will be contented with the faith which is set down for them, and, forbearing—I will not say to be wise—but inventive, above what is written,

will reconcile themselves to believing—not that Jesus is God the Son, but that which he emphatically declares himself to be,—the Son of God. It is such a faith I find promulged—‘Who-soever shall confess that *Jesus is the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.’ It was upon this confession the eunuch was baptized; it was upon this confession that Peter was pronounced to be blessed; nay, upon this confession it was that the church of Christ was built *as upon a rock*, against which the waves of time or the power of evil should in vain essay their strength.

“I pass on to a remark, which I own has occupied my thoughts—may I say has excited my surprise—in no slight degree. You propose it to Unitarians, as a test of their *liberality*, that they should consent to *worship* ‘God in Christ,’ or, as you again express it, ‘God incarnate.’ Now to this I have mainly and at once to object, that I am unable to frame to myself such an object of worship even in idea. Figuratively and loosely speaking, I see much in the expression, ‘God in Christ,’ to love and prize and bring home to my heart; but theologically and strictly understood, I must declare that my conception of God—indelibly, immutably, invincibly—is that of a Spirit, having no relation whatever to body. On this point I acquiesce to the very letter in the definition contained in the first Article of the Church of England,—that God is a Being ‘without body, parts or passions;’ and if it were possible to hesitate as to its propriety, that hesitation would be instantly overborne by the express affirmation of Christ himself—and blessed be Heaven we have so true and guileless an instructor!—‘that God is a Spirit; that they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth; and that the Father—pray observe this—the Father is *that God* who seeketh such to worship Him.’ Is it then *truth* or fiction—is it piety or outrage, for one and the same Church to affirm that that pure, unchangeable and all-present Spirit whom she defines to be ‘*without body*,’ nevertheless *has* a body?—and that the impassible Being whom she describes as ‘without parts or passions,’ may yet be subject to ‘passion,’ and be made to undergo pain, agony and death, under the hands of men? And let it be re-

membered that in this predicament the refuge of the *two natures*—of which, however, I observe, with some surprise, you do not avail yourself—affords but a treacherous aid; for we must suppose that the Romish devotion adopted in the English service was intended to be addressed to that portion of Christ which was capable of hearing and relieving—that is to say, the divine portion of him.\*

“Nevertheless, both these Churches in common are actually guilty at once of the absurdity and the irreverence of ascribing to this *divine portion* of him those sufferings which yet it is a main design of the hypothesis of the two natures to limit to the

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\* “Much as I have already trespassed—and am still to trespass—on your time and patience, may I avail myself of this opportunity of adverting to a passage by Archbishop Whately, in his *Errors of Romanism*, which struck me very forcibly for its undesigned adaptation to the subject I have glanced at above? He is speaking of the *mental reservation* which the patrons of civil interference in matters of religion have attributed to our Lord, when he declared that ‘his kingdom was not of this world,’ and in his just reprobation of such a notion proceeds to observe—‘But the very idea is blasphemous of attributing such a subterfuge to Him who came into the world that He might bear witness of the truth.’

“Now let us compare with this very proper indignation, the curiously similar comment of an author of some little note in the world—I mean John Milton—who in discussing the words of our Lord, Matt. xx. 23, takes occasion to reprove what he terms ‘that commonly-received drama of the personalities in the God-head,’ in the following manner:

“‘It is not mine to give, &c.—that is, in my mediatorial capacity, as it is commonly interpreted. But questionless when the ambition of the mother and her two sons invited them to prefer this important petition, they addressed their petition to the *entire nature* of Christ, how exalted soever it might be, praying him to grant their request according to the utmost of his power, whether as God or man. Christ also answers with reference to *his whole nature*, ‘It is not mine to give,’ declaring that it was altogether out of his province, and the exclusive privilege of his Father. If his reply were meant solely to refer to his mediatorial capacity, it would have bordered on sophistry, which *God forbid that we should attribute to him*; as if he were capable of evading the request of Salome and her sons by the quibble which the logicians call *expositio prava* or *equivoca*, when the respondent answers in a sense, or with a mental intention, different from the meaning of the questioner. And the same may be said of other passages of the same kind where Christ speaks of himself,’ &c.

“It would be curious—were the subject suggested to his thoughts—if, seeing the force of the remark I have quoted from his own pages, the Archbishop should be wholly insensible to its effect in the masterly argument undertaken by Milton. But there is no saying: in theology, as in dreams, things so often ‘go by contraries,’ that no inconsistency ought to surprise one. He who remembers the ‘paradoxes’ of Bacon, might tremble for the greatest of minds.

human: for what other construction can their language admit—  
 ‘By thine agony and bloody sweat—by thy cross and passion—  
 by thy precious death and burial?’ Pray *whose* death and burial?  
 If that of the man, the prayer is idolatrous; if that of God, it  
 is insane and blasphemous; if that of a something inseparably  
 compounded of both, then what becomes of the inseparability  
 at the moment those words were uttered on the cross, ‘My God,  
 my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?’

“Upon such purely Popish monstrosities, upon the ‘golden  
 sanctions and pious proclamations’ of brain-sick emperors and  
 ferocious priests, it is that professing Protestants to this hour  
 are contented to construct their form of adoration. Forgetting,  
 in their imaginary purism, the affinity which chains them to a  
 church whose more consistent insanities—you know it is possible,  
*cum ratione insaniere*—taught our eighth Henry to swear by  
 ‘God’s body,’ and commanding the familiar invocation of God’s  
 mother, have actually attempted, if I mistake not, to provide for  
 the due recognition of God’s grandmother! Where, then, again  
 and again I ask, are these deplorable aberrations to cease? and  
 where are we to find any rest for our souls from these out-  
 pourings of superstition, fanaticism and credulity, except in the  
 calm, rational, consistent teachings of undistorted, unexaggerated  
 Scripture itself? Why embrace difficulties, as it were, for diffi-  
 culties’ sake? Why not labour to render that which is so ines-  
 timably precious as Christianity, as *credible* as may be? Why  
 oppress it with doctrines ‘at which Reason stands aghast, and  
 Faith herself is half confounded,’ until the insuperable neces-  
 sity for so doing shall have been fairly and fully demonstrated?  
 And even then, O God! what a triumph for human hearts to  
 endure, that that which they had fondly revered as the source of  
 so much light and joy and blessedness, was to be consigned to  
 the inflated fanaticism and bigotry of one half the world, and  
 the withering scepticism and scorn of the other!

“I ask these questions because I have never yet seen any  
 proposition from Scripture in behalf of the proper divinity of  
 Christ, which could not be neutralized by considerations drawn  
 either from the ambiguous sense, or the doubtful authority, or

the irrelevant application of the passage so quoted. For example, 'God manifest in the flesh.' Well, supposing this text to be genuine, which it is not—supposing all that Sir Isaac Newton and others have alleged against it to go for nothing—supposing the text of Griesbach, which you know rejects it, to be in utter error—and supposing the charge of fraudulent tampering against a single Greek father, or zealous or mistaken copyist, to be wholly void of proof—nevertheless, why, upon any principle, except that the more voracious and indiscriminating my belief is, by so much the better Christian, as certainly the better Hindoo or Mussulman, I should be\*—why, I say, am I to close at once with a dogma, the difficulties and contradictions of which are absolutely endless, rather than simply expound the passage as Christ himself explained the analogous words, 'He that hath *seen* me, hath *seen* the Father'?—which he very plainly does in the succeeding verse—'The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of *myself*; but the Father that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the *works*.' 'He that sent me is *with* me.' Just as Nicodemus had said, 'No man can *do the works* that thou doest, except God be *with* him;' and just as the evangelist Luke relates, that after the raising of the widow's son 'the people glorified God, saying that a *great Prophet* is risen up amongst us, and that God hath *visited* his people.' Had Christ said, He that *receiveth* me, *receiveth* the Father, there would have been nothing wonderful in it; for they would have been easily explained by the words, 'He that receiveth *you*, receiveth *me*; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me.' Wherefore, then, should the perfectly analogous phrase, 'He that *seeth* me, *seeth* the Father,' be thought one iota more mysterious? or wherein does it fail as the obvious exponent of the not more bold and figurative phrase—supposing that phrase to be Scripture—'God manifest in the flesh'? It is rather remarkable that all this while Christ is described in the Scriptures as being the 'Image of the invisible God'—assuredly,

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\* "Such was once the proudly orthodox distinction of the inhabitant of the Nile:

Qualia demens  
Ægyptus portenta colat.

therefore, not that invisible God himself; who, moreover, is described as the Being 'who only hath immortality—dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto—whom no man hath seen or can see.'

"But if I am thus insensible to anything like *mystery* in the passage already discussed—and what Paul meant by mystery, transcendently such, may be plainly seen in Eph. i. 9, 10, and Col. i. 26, 27—by what possibility am I to see it in that argument for the religious adoration of Christ which you found on the words inadvertently quoted by you in the following form: 'That all men should worship the Son, even as they worship the Father'? It is surely only necessary to remind you that the expression is, 'That all men should *honour*—τιμωσι—the Son, even as they honour the Father.' In order to satisfy your judgment of the true and simple meaning designed by our Lord, let us observe what follows: 'He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him.' Now supposing this honour to mean religious adoration, I have but one or two very short questions to ask: Would the proposition in that sense be true? Is it a fact that Peter and John held themselves bound by such a rule in their prayer as recorded in Acts iv. 24? Is it a fact that Paul came up to Jerusalem to worship the Son, when he declared that 'after the manner which his accusers called heresy, so worshiped he the God of his fathers'? Is it a fact that Paul inculcated such a worship on the Athenians in that memorable discourse of his on Mars' hill? Believing these questions to be of some moment in the inquiry, as such I leave them without further comment.

"Returning, however, to the more sober view of the passage relied on, and taking for our guide the closely connected clause I have referred to, viz., 'He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him,' let us inquire, have we any parallel passage to produce which may serve to shew *what* the honour is that is here intended? I think we have, and in particular that of Luke x. 16, in the instructions of our Lord to the twelve disciples: 'He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me.' But

in what did this despising—this contrary to honouring consist? Here, again, let us see how the parallel place in Matthew represents it: ‘He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me.’ The despising, therefore, was the not receiving of Christ and his authorized messengers; so that by a process not unlike the Algebraic—the substitution of equivalent quantities—it can be easily shewn that the description of ‘honour’ required by Christ was simply the hearing of his claims and the belief in his authority as ‘the Sent’ of God; in particular, that all judgment having been committed to him by the Father, men should hear *his* words and obey *his* commandments with precisely the same reverence they would evince, had God himself condescended to deliver them. In both cases, it was the same authority—in both, the same power—that of the *Father*—which would be exerted, and which could not be the less binding that they were mediately and instrumentally made known by his accredited messenger, instead of directly from the throne of the Father himself. Consistently with this view, we find our Lord immediately subjoining, ‘He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me’—attesting as He does my mission by the wonderful works He enables me to do—‘hath everlasting life.’ And in order further to shew *why* men should confidingly submit to his judgment, he takes occasion to assure them by expressly declaring, ‘I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.’

“So little ground does there appear, upon the evidence of this text, for religious adoration towards a person who in every instance without exception, in the use of the pronoun, I, me, myself, broadly and emphatically distinguishes between himself and that Lord God, his Father and our Father, ‘whom only we are to worship and to serve’ (*λατρευειν*).

“And yet, painfully sensible as I am of the length to which my dissertations have run—for letter I cannot call it—I am bound to advert to a notice, at the conclusion of yours, of one more passage—happily the last with which I am to trouble you

—which at first hearing might be thought to sound something like an argument the other way, but to which I had imagined few, in the present state of the controversy, would be disposed to resort: ‘The Father and I are one.’ Suffice it to say, that in order to determine *the sense* of this oneness with God, it appears to me a reference should be had to *exactly the same words* in John xvii., where Christ prays that ‘the disciples may be one, even as he and the Father are one,’—a sense which must be palpable indeed, when even Calvin could avow that ‘the ancients improperly applied this passage’—and how many silly things these ancients thought, by the bye—‘to prove that Christ is of the same substance with the Father. For Christ does not argue concerning unity of substance, but speaks of *the consent* which he has with the Father; so that whatever is done by Christ, will be confirmed by the Father’s power.’ To that power Christ refers all; and it strikes me it would be no bad test of our Christianity were we to be content to do and to say as Christ himself did. ‘Whatever,’ says Martha, ‘thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.’ ‘Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee that thou shouldst see the glory of God?’ ‘And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stood by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.’ ‘Now have they known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, *are of thee*.’ Finally, be it remembered, the Son—not Jesus merely, but the Son—the second Person in the supposed co-equal Trinity—yes! let it be deeply registered in every Christian soul—‘the Son can of himself do nothing;’ and the mystical dogma delusively ascribed to the words, ‘The Father and I are one,’ vanishes into thin air before the indestructible, consistent and purely intelligible truth, ‘The Father is greater than I.’

“And now having committed the offence, I have at length, like all too late repenting sinners, to deprecate the displeasure too justly to be feared as the consequence. Yet I am not without hope, but would fain persuade myself that the interest you have permitted me to take and to express in the doctrinal opinions



which sway such a mind as yours, will have some efficacy in procuring me a pardon for entering so largely and critically into the examination of opinions which I am presuming enough to think—so far as they belong to you—consort but indifferently with the character of your understanding, and with the pure and beautiful conceptions of the religion of the gospel which you prevailingly express. You say that you avow to your friends that your theological studies have long been ‘carried on in the spirit of the divines called Unitarians.’ As a Unitarian myself—as connecting my every hope and thought of the eternal world—as nourishing my daily spiritual life—and blessing my God and Father for the means of grace and for the hope of glory dispensed to us by his Son Jesus Christ—in a word, as interweaving my whole religious existence with such views as alone can render Christianity to me intelligible, credible and instructive—as alone can render it a light unto my path and a comfort to my heart—I would to God you were not in part, but altogether—in letter as in spirit—such as I am, save my inferior powers of vindicating the truths of God, and my experience—every day more vivid—of the incompatibility of these rational and consoling views of our God and of his Christ with a comfortable intercourse with unsympathizing friends—or a world but little disposed either to understand or to respect the fearless and disinterested prosecution of unfavoured opinions.

“But Truth, we know, is a hardy plant, and will sooner or later bring forth fruit abundantly. We believe that a brighter time is coming, and with strides perceptibly accelerating. In the meantime, the servant must not be greater than his Lord; and even were our troubles incomparably more formidable than they are or ever *can* be again—thanks to the champions who have conquered the most precious of our liberties—we know who has said, ‘In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.’

“Believe me to remain, dear Sir, with a lively interest in everything you think and write, and with humble trust that God may bless these thoughts with good to you, to me, or to us both,

“Ever your faithful and obliged servant,” &c. &c.

Mr. Armstrong bestowed much time and thought on these letters, which give an interesting summary of his opinions and the state of his mind at this period; indeed, while writing them he seems to have more definitely settled his own theological position and its relation to the Unitarian church than he had ever done before.

Their effect on Blanco White was to convince him finally of the untenableness of the arguments by which he had tried to persuade himself "that there was enough of truth in the Church to which he had attached himself to justify the very slight connection which he had maintained with her for the last three years;"\* and, consequently, the imperative duty of removing from the house of Archbishop Whately, and relinquishing the position he had hitherto held in that prelate's family. He wrote to Mr. Armstrong announcing his intention, and adds in a post-script,—“I fear I have never thanked you for your instrumentality in rousing me to a sense of duty in regard to a truth of the utmost importance, which, though I had fully examined, circumstances had not allowed to penetrate my heart.”

Mr. A. thus mentions the receipt of this letter, and his subsequent interview with the writer, in his journal for 1835:†

“Wednesday, January 7th. Received a letter from Mr. Blanco White, announcing his intended departure from Ireland. Prepared to proceed to Dublin the following morning to see and take leave of my interesting friend.

“Thursday, January 8th. Proceeded to Archbishop of Dublin's, Stephen's Green, where I had the happiness of meeting for the first time my friend and correspondent, Mr. Blanco White. Our conversation lasted an hour and a half, and was, of course, to me most interesting. Would I could recollect the terms of his beautiful letter to the Archbishop, which he shewed me, but of which, from motives of delicacy, he refused me a copy! Saw his private journal of our late occurrences, with his admirable reflections. I could observe a tendency in his mind

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\* See Life of Blanco White, Vol. II. p. 68.

† Some journals earlier than 1837 have been found since the publication of the first part of this Memoir.

to German theology, which I must endeavour to arrest. Fine distinction he drew between *truth* and the *cause of truth*; between truth as ascertained by *fallible man*, and the cause of truth, which can only be upheld by inviting, rather than discouraging and reproaching, the independent, and, by necessity, the often erring prosecution of it. Took a very affectionate farewell of this singularly able and upright-minded man."

During the year 1834, Mr. Armstrong was also busy with politics, and contributed several papers connected with them to Tait's Magazine; one, on the Alliance of Church and State, in the number for March, entitled, "The Question of Questions;" another, on "The Morality of Party," in the April following; and "A Letter to Lord Brougham" on his opposition to the Anti-State-Church movement, in the number for July. Mr. Armstrong in after life very much modified his opinions on this latter subject; but at the time of which we are speaking, irritated by the gross injustice of forcing an alien Church on an unwilling people, and the iniquitous and cruel measures adopted in wringing tithes from a population impoverished by partial and bad legislation, he denounced the Established Church in Ireland in no measured terms. His kind heart bled with pity and his noble soul filled with indignation at the sight of armed policemen—sometimes, I believe, even soldiers—carrying off "the pots and the pans, the blankets and flannel petticoats, of the poor," to pay a bigoted priesthood without congregations, and with little pity for and no sympathy with their victims. No wonder, when excited by such scenes, and stimulated by views of religious liberty which had led him "to scale the walls of his prison-house," as he somewhere says, if his words were strong and his tone were loud and high. Many of his brilliant thoughts lie buried in that dead sea of literature, past numbers of newspapers and magazines; so it seems worth while to rescue a few sentences from one of the articles on the "Question of Questions," to shew how powerfully he wielded his pen in a righteous cause.

"Now the malt-tax is £4,000,000, and in the venerable name of Cocker we demand to be heard, when we dare aver that the Horse, Foot

and Artillery, together with police, special commissions, and the machinery of law required to prop up the Church MILITANT in Ireland, do not fall much short of this agricultural tax. Here, then, is a practical question for the barley-growers of England! We are sorely pinched by the times, and grievously tormented by the exciseman; but the man at the Exchequer tells us he cannot afford to relieve us. . . . . Ought we, then, to look patiently on while the 39 Articles of Cranmer are piously stuck on the point of a bayonet, and presented to the Catholic people of Ireland, who, although they refuse the goods, are mercilessly made to pay the price, *at a cost of collection* which would go near to relieve us of the burden under which we are sinking?

"There is not a tax-payer in Britain who may not express himself in similar terms. One and all, then, it behoves them to inquire and diligently to see to it, whether it be justice—we do not say to the sister country, but to their wives and little ones—to throw themselves on the parish, or live upon potato-bread and water-gruel, in order that the non-working clergy of one-twelfth of the people of Ireland may clothe themselves in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously in the midst of an obstinately recusant and rack-rent population. . . .

"Now we confess there is not a service to the nation and to mankind in which we should more heartily embark than the pulling their disguise off these political maskers, who, *inheriting their opinions as they do their estates*, yet, at every hustings in the country, surrounded by their drunken or venal or bigot partizans, presume to take the name of religion on their lips, and preach up the necessity (we are prepared to maintain what we say) of promulgating the Gospel of grace and truth and peace by the unhallowed intervention of dragooning, and the brutal propagandism of the sword! Who that ever asked himself, or ever sincerely inculcated on the conscience of another, that mighty question, 'What is truth?' could tranquilly endure the imagination of its diffusion being, even remotely, connected with so barbarous and unholy an instrumentality? And yet there are actually men who, dealing out their solemn phrases about 'that pure creed of Protestantism' which they and their abettors pretend to 'enjoy,' but about which they would think themselves affronted if it were imputed to them that they had ever spontaneously set themselves deliberately to think for half an hour together in their lives,—such men there are, who, resorting to agencies which the Redeemer himself would have shrunk from in behalf of the living and actual Gospel, would drain England of her uttermost farthing,

and Ireland of her last drop of blood, for the maintenance of dogmas which they have never examined.

"We meet at once the objection of which sophistry will be prompt to avail itself. We will not permit these persons to delude us by the evasion that it is not for the enforcement of religion, but *the protection of property*, that they consent to see Ireland bristling with bayonets. *Curtail the religion of all but the voluntary support of the people, and violence will cease to be needed.* Give to religion the right to exact from a reluctant population the means of its outward support, and it not only becomes, *but you make it*, the occasion of every drop of blood which is shed. He who, regardless of the anterior and inalienable rights of others, does that, in the name of Religion, which he knows will be followed by the impulse to defend those anterior rights, makes religion directly responsible for all the consequences. . . . .

"If ever, however, there were circumstances in a controversy to gratify to his heart's content the lover of truth and right, these circumstances are found to overflowing in the question now pending between England and Ireland. Ireland, the Popish, the dark, the trodden, the despised, heaving with a spirit which is destined to enlighten Europe! Ireland, out of the very depths of her ignorance, teaching Britain how to legislate!

"Is it not so, thou Graham of Netherby? And is it not accordingly written, that the very harlots go into the kingdom of God before the self-applauding priest and Pharisee? Strange but much-teaching fact, that out of the *creed-stricken hosts of Popery* a voice is going forth, which is sending the Protestant to his horn-book, to learn the principles of his own Protestantism; and Superstition herself exerting her might in a cause which it is the stigma and the curse of the Reformation to have left incomplete! For what is it Ireland seeks? Simply that the magistrate should mind his own affairs; and, *keeping the peace* between dissentients, leave the saving of souls to those whom the people appoint and are willing to pay for that peculiar service;—in short, *she seeks to be left alone*; and, without an Ascendancy which her people discard—but with the aid of Education, which they are eager to accept—to take her chance for truth or error, as time and knowledge, and long-withheld repose, under the eye of an all-disposing Providence, may eventually direct. Is this what her imperious partner has been willing to concede? No!" . . . . .

In his article on the "Morality of Party," he had a congenial

subject, which he treats with great ability, advocating the necessity of a regard for "measures" and not for "men." With reference to these articles, Mr. Tait writes to him as follows :

"Edinburgh, 22nd March, 1834.

"My dear Sir,—I have printed your 'Morality of Party,' and made it the leader, although by so doing I have made the number too political for the general reader, and the general reader I must please, otherwise I can do no good at all. Your articles are all full of sound and excellent views. They are learned, well considered, and well expressed. I have no fault to find with them but their length, and that fault is not in them, but in my own want of room.

"When you send me a paper, consider, for the occasion, you are writing to the Examiner, and you will exactly hit the length that is best for me—best for me because best for the public. If you take up Short Parliaments, however, that must be a long paper. The article on 'Pledges,' I shall give as early as I can ; but my next number must be light ; this one will be considered heavy.

"My new scheme is succeeding bravely. I now operate on a very large portion of the public mind.

"Yours, &c.,                      W. TAIT."

He had a peculiar zest for politics, and was never happier nor more at home than in the consideration and discussion of the *res publicæ*. From early youth he took an interest in this "great branch of public morals;" and the rise and fall of empires, the struggles for liberty, and the influence of legislation on the advance of civilization and "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," were subjects of his most attentive study. As a minister of the gospel, a profession of which he was always proud, and a title to which through all changes of theological opinions and external position he tenaciously and affectionately clung, he considered politics an important part of his duty, and one particularly fitting that sacred calling. This is not the opinion of many people, who think a clergyman should hold himself aloof from the strifes and struggles of the lower world ; and so thought some

of Mr. Armstrong's friends; for among his papers I have found the following letter of justification to a near relative who had evidently reproached him with an unbecoming zeal in the maintenance or defence of his views of politics:

"Extract of a letter to A——, dated

"Bingfield, February, 1822.

"By the bye, I thought you might have been *amused*, but could hardly suppose you could have been really 'shocked,' at the casual expression I used in reference to I——'s stability of principle in his political life. I should rather say, indeed, C——; for *your own* expressions are so little *evangelical*—to say the least of them—that I can scarcely accuse *you* of any great severity of sentiment on the occasion. It is evident she has as yet some sad materials to work upon in you, if you imagine that 'pecuniary' independence is the only thing of that name worth preserving. I wish you were a little bit of an historian, as I could then point out some examples which might instruct you: and, among the rest, honest Andrew Marvell and his cold shoulder of mutton. He was Member for Hull in the time of Charles II., and, while sitting at his simple repast, behaved with such Roman dignity when Lord Danby, the King's Prime Minister, did him the honour of calling to *compliment him* in his Majesty's name, as must even have extorted the admiration of a Methodist. To invoke Heaven for the blessing of such 'independence' as this man exhibited to the staggered courtier, might not perhaps have been considered very heathenish in the best days of Christianity; certain it is, the author of Philippians iv. 8, would not have so thought; but our 'good people' of modern days have found out that these were the weak points of St. Paul.

"By these remarks I merely wish to point out the true nature of 'independence,' not at all supposing that our friend is in any danger of an interested departure from his opinions in such good company as I take Lord Lansdowne to be. But when I found you talking of the subsidence of 'youthful exaggeration,' and recollected the examples of apostacy in his profession,—such as Gifford, Copley, Leach, Best, &c. &c., all the present *bien*

*boligés* of the present administration, though all formerly their avowed enemies in the House of Commons, and the friends of that popular policy which the majority of honest and reflecting men are now more eagerly than ever looking for,—I was naturally enough led to the reflection in question.

“What youthful exaggerations of opinion I—— may have begun to repent of, I know not; I have never heard him, I believe, go to greater lengths than the wisest, or, if you please, the oldest and the gravest men have gone before him. These *old men*, travelling in the steps of Mr. Fox, are saying the same things every year of their lives; and I could recommend to him no better opinions, nor desire any better for myself, than those which the Greys, the Erskines and the Mackintoshes, seem likely to take with them to the grave.

“As to the impropriety of a clergyman thinking of those matters, I must observe, that there is not a clergyman in the land whose opinions are not as fixed—I will not say, *deliberate*—as my own. ‘To prefer what we have, and to remain where we are, is *to choose just as decidedly* as if we did the contrary,’ as Sismondi says; and *this is their case*. In the next place, ‘politics being an essential branch of public morals,’ and being treated as such by most moral writers, I assert the right, and oftentimes the duty, of every clergyman to interfere, restrained only by decency and good sense. To say the truth, however, I have no wish to see them much encouraged in this interference, as it unfortunately happens that the Established clergy in all states almost uniformly interfere on the wrong side—that is, on the side of power; and the more arbitrary that power, the more firm their adherence. This is historically true, and *the injury arising to religion* from this intimacy between human governments and its ministers is incalculable. Were it otherwise, *Attorneys-General* would have little to do in its behalf; religion would stand on its own proper grounds, unconcerned at the temporary agitations of the State: the people would universally *respect*, because they would no longer have occasion to *suspect*, it.

“I said these remarks on the clergy were historically true. We see the thing at this moment in France; the *old* Royalist



and old Church parties are all in all. Our ancestors have seen the same thing in England long enough after the Reformation; but, thanks to that great and salutary instrument, public opinion, that body are less obnoxious now than in former times. Now what is this 'public opinion'? Is it not essentially made up of the impressions of individuals like you and me? And the more such individuals make use of their reason on the public events of their country, the more worthy are they of living under that constitution in its perfection, which placemen, sycophants and ignoramuses, are everlastingly extolling in its corruptions.

"In short, whether you stamp me as another Sir Harcourt—worthy similitude!—or call it 'youthful exaggeration'—though, by the bye, I am getting pretty tough now—or describe it as you or others may,—I look upon politics as a subject of morals, as a subject of philosophy, as a part of the history of man; and I cannot behold the perversion of one of the most glorious of human institutions, which I look upon the British Constitution, in its genuine spirit and tendency, from its earliest annals to be, without feeling some portion of indignation at the successive agents of that perversion.

"Mr. Pitt himself, after the example of his illustrious father, had once the boldness to affirm,—and a hundred times, indeed, the same thing, under a variety of phrases,—that without a recovery from those perversions—in other words, without a Parliamentary Reform—*no honest Minister could serve his country*. Mr. Wilberforce has said that 'influence meets every man at every corner;' and what is this but such a predominant power in the Crown as reduces the representative principle to an absolute nullity? Why, A—— man, I don't despair to see yourself begin to reason about these things. See our brother farmers in England, hitherto the too willing, because interested, supporters of extravagance,—see how they are turning round, amazed at the weight of a debt of 840,000,000 of pounds sterling upon their shoulders!

"Mr. Webb Hall recommends high duties; the people see the nonsense of this, and perceive at last that an unsparing retrenchment of the public profusions is the only remedy. The wonder

is, how any one can look at those figures, and recollect also *how* the yearly millions are squandered which are still wrung from the country *over and above* the annual interest of the millions owed, making in all upwards of fifty millions a-year in this time of peace, and hold his tongue. A still greater wonder it is, that any one, whether lay or clerical, could be blamed for pondering upon these enormous truths, and all their consequences to the country, both at home and abroad, predicted too, as they know them to have been, years upon years ago, by some of the greatest luminaries in the senate. The wonder *does cease*, however, when it appears that none but those who have *never troubled their heads about the matter*, or the more despicable tools of an avenging party, could think of offering such blame. Our country is the sphere of everything dear to us, the nurse of our religion, the inheritance of our children, and no man ought to be ashamed of wishing to see her more wisely and happily managed.

“So much for ‘youthful exaggeration.’ Believe me,” &c. &c.

Mr. Armstrong was thirty years of age when he wrote this letter. We have seen him consistently following the same independent and generous course of action till he was twelve years older; and we shall see him, like “the Greys, the Erskines and the Mackintoshes,” carrying these noble principles with him to the grave.

But it was not in politics only that his prudent friends and relatives thought it necessary occasionally to check his “youthful exaggeration.” His growing dislike to orthodoxy alarmed them, and his proneness to speak his mind evidently called forth many an exhortation to have patience with the prejudices, and not to declare war against the established opinions, of the world of fashion and of power. While, however, it was useless to recommend silence to George Armstrong on subjects so sacred and important—subjects on the right understanding of which he felt depended the welfare of the world as well as the peace of his own conscience—it was not difficult to secure moderation in the publication, and infinite care in the formation, of his opinions. Of these elements in his character, and of its deep sincerity, the

following entries in his private journal at the end of the year 1834, give a fair idea :

“December 29. Looked over most of Archbishop Whately’s works, and the justly-famed ‘Essays on Opinion,’—my object being to re-consider, as I was perfectly ready to re-approve, the arguments in favour of forming and *communicating* our thoughts on moral and religious subjects.

“December 31. Wrote in my ‘Thought-book’ on Assurance in Religion and on the Promulgation of Opinion. Day soft, with wind and rain. Heard a thrush sing.”

He closes these thoughts on the “Promulgation of Opinion,” with such charitable, gentle sentiments as the following :

“But, after all, however defensible and meritorious, abstractedly considered, the duty may seem of bringing opinions, whether our own or those of others, to the test of discussion, the great practical objection remains, that *no good* is to be effected by such efforts. Prejudices may be assailed and friendships be endangered ; but if opinions remain the same, wherefore incur so great and close an evil, in the contemplation of a remote and doubtful and hardly attainable good ? . . . . .

“When it is assumed as a condition, that the holder of an unfavoured opinion shall never undertake its defence but in the spirit of meekness and fear, of love and of a sound mind, is it not at least likely that, though the persuasion may remain unaltered, the prejudice will be less embittered ? And surely this is *something* gained. . . . . And is it not plain that, the spirit of denunciation being once weakened, a barrier to the intercommunication of minds is proportionally shaken, and the possibility of a nearer approach to unanimity on controverted points prodigiously facilitated ? . . . . .

“In this labour, the work of a single individual may be of small amount. But it is of infinite consequence to remember the maxim which has guided, sustained and encouraged all the great and good who have ever worked in the service of mankind—all who have laboured for the diffusion of truth, justice and wisdom, throughout the earth, that ‘no effort is lost.’ . . . . .

"Even the greatest of minds have but rarely perceived in the sympathy of their times the homage which awaits them from a grateful posterity. Yet how much the world would have been a loser, if the timid, or despairing, or selfish counsels of contemporaries had overpowered or impaired their desire of adding to the moral and intellectual wealth of their species!"

The education of his children, society, study and literary composition, continued to occupy his time during the year 1835. The first half of it was spent in the house of his brother at Kilsharvan, but at Midsummer he moved, with his family, into one of his own in Dublin. A few extracts from his diary and his correspondence will best illustrate his way of life, which was ever of the same useful, contemplative, consistent tenor.

"Wednesday, Jan. 21, 1835. In the house all day. Much occupied in reflecting on the strange notions of my evangelical friends touching the doctrine of spiritual visitations. Now it ought to be decisive of the controversy that our Lord teaches that the Spirit itself is only to be had *by asking* for it, Luke xi. 13. The expression, 'No man can come to me except the Father draw him,' appears to be of much the same import as that, 'If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine;' that is, unless a person has been in the habit of acting *in the spirit of truth and cultivating communion with God* according to the light he has had, he will not be capable and will not be disposed to give my claims to his belief a favourable hearing;—which exactly tallies with that other intimation, 'This is the condemnation, that men love darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil.' See Matt. xiii. 12, &c., and then John xii. 40.

"Thursday, 22nd. Walked a good deal with Mrs. A. Engaged with same meditations as yesterday. Have collected some, I would hope useful, results for future production.

"Luke xi. 6, and James iv. 8 and i. 5, do not look much in favour of the fanatical notion of 'prevenient grace.' Read Old Mortality aloud in the parlour. Battle of London Hill, &c.

"Friday, January 23rd. Occupied with the same subject as yesterday. It seems strikingly plain, upon calm and meditative

investigation, that this doctrine of the Spirit, after all, is more a theological form of speech than the expression of a truth which Scripture really warrants, considered with reference to Christians in latter times. The spirit, in point of fact, is the *inward man*, which St. Paul so instructively places in opposition to the *flesh*, in Romans vii. 15, 23; and it is the following this guide which is called 'following the spirit,' in the nearly parallel passage in Galatians v. 16, 17. These two passages, properly considered, ought to put an end to the controversy.

"Sunday, January 25th. Reading Professor Norton's work on the Trinity, &c. Delighted with his affecting and beautiful conclusion.

"Monday, 26th. Received a letter from Liverpool from Blanco White. Read over and noted two letters of his admirable projected work."

He was at this time reading and noting Mr. Blanco White's manuscript of the work on Heresy and Orthodoxy, at the desire of that gentleman.

"Friday, March 13th. A long letter from Dr. Channing. A letter from Blanco White, desiring to leave his papers, by will, to my care.

"Wednesday, March 25th. Day of surpassing loveliness. Out the whole morning, studying Bentham, Mackintosh, and Utilitarian Catechism on the Theory of Morals. Received a very gratifying letter from Mr. Blanco White. Splendid paper in the Spectator newspaper on the subject of the 'Swiss Liberties.'

"Thursday, March 26th. Received a most gratifying letter from Mr. Martineau."

Mr. Armstrong's third paper on the "Question of Questions" appeared in Tait's Magazine for this month of March, and he mentions in his diary a visit to the Chamber of Commerce in Dublin, "to see the file of the Sun, in which my paper in Tait is much applauded."\*

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\* "The Stanley and Graham plan of Church Reform is ably and mercilessly shewn up by our stout Radical friend Tait this month. Not a leg does he leave these unhappy statesmen to stand upon. The article is in his best manner, and will flash conviction on the minds of all who are not duller of comprehension than 'the fat weed that rots on Lethe's wharf.'"—*Sun Newspaper*, March, 1835.

He generally passed his Sundays at home, reading the service for the day from the Revised Book of Common Prayer in the library or drawing-room, and a sermon of Paley or Channing or some other favourite author; but he did not entirely absent himself from the public worship of the Church of England, as the following curious correspondence shews :

*To the Rev. George N——.*

“ Kilsharvan, April 19th, 1835.

“ Dear Sir,—Although I have not the pleasure of being more than slightly acquainted with you, you will, I am sure, as a Christian teacher, forgive the liberty which I, as a Christian inquirer, feel impelled to take in soliciting some further development of the views which it was my fortune to hear you deliver from your pulpit on Good Friday last. In order to prevent misconception and surprise, give me leave to premise that, although educated to the clerical profession and for some time a beneficed minister of the Established Church, it is now a considerable period since my mind became seriously impressed by the complicated and, at length, insuperable difficulties,—arising, as I conceive, as well from internal absurdity, as from the absence of all satisfactory scriptural testimony,—by which the creed of my church was encumbered, and since, consequently, I was induced to sever myself from all professional connection with her.

“ In this state of mind I have been for some years, not regretting certainly my secession, which it rendered imperative upon me, because I have been supported by a sense of duty, and a perception that the unfettered investigation of truth which it involved was in itself a consolation, and conferred a dignity on my intellectual being unfelt before; yet not so rigid a separatist either, as to feel myself precluded from occasionally, as accident or circumstances might lead, presenting myself in such places of worship or such churches as the character of the clergyman officiating therein might prompt me to hope, if not for entire satisfaction, at least for a balance of spiritual good. Thus feeling and thus hoping, I was induced for the first time to visit your church on Good Friday, and to be among the number of your hearers on that day. May I be excused for saying that the

experiment was not attended with the effect anticipated; and that some propositions were avowed in your discourse which distressed, and had my ideas been less settled on the subject would have perplexed, me not a little.

"It was in truth with more than ordinary pain I heard it declared—nay, insisted on as the crowning mercy of Heaven and the theme of everlasting gratitude to man—'either that the Bible was a book of fables, or that Christ who died on the cross was actually himself the Supreme and Everlasting God'!

"On such occasions it is something at least to be in the hands of a person who is *not* a fanatic, but who *is* a scholar,—a character, I believe, which is applicable to you. It appears, then, to me that a sober thinker would incline to admit that there *was one other possibility* which might have had a place in the number of the conclusions to which the choice of your hearers was invited; and that the enumeration would have been more complete, more logical, as it would certainly have been more tolerant, had you added—'or else I may have mistaken the true import of the language of Holy Writ.' That such a contingency, so possible and so human, was the more likely to occur to a reasonable man upon his recollecting, as any man acquainted with the controversy could hardly fail to do, how many admirable and worthy believers in the truth of divine revelation there have been—Milton among the number—nay more, how many invaluable defenders of that truth—I need only mention the name of Lardner—there have been who both would deny and have denied, with all their might and strength, the legitimacy of the very startling conclusion—I restrain myself from qualifying it by any stronger epithet—you so broadly and uncompromisingly affirmed in the discourse alluded to."

Then follows a powerfully written argument against the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and exposure of the contradictions it involves, which it is not necessary to introduce here. The clergyman replies as follows:

"May 1, 1835.

"My dear Sir,—On looking this moment at your letter, I feel ashamed that I have not answered you before this. Truth

is the best apology. Your letter, dated 13th ult., I did not receive until the 26th, being from home during the holidays; and a gentleman came back with me, who never allowed me to be alone for one minute, I may say, until he left me yesterday.

“In truth, your letter puzzles me; but the puzzle is not to me a new one. I never could answer satisfactorily the arguments it contains, nor do I believe they *can* be answered. However, these arguments do not shake my faith in the doctrine; though, as I have said already, they appear to me to be *unanswerable*—and more you surely do not want me to concede. The doctrine of the Trinity is, I think, not a proposition according to reason,—nor yet contrary to reason, but above reason, therefore matter of revelation and the object of faith. Revelation appears to me to be explicit on the point, and reason’s province is in such a case to be dumb. The Bible says it is so, and you have brought no argument to shew it does not say so. If it be not a revealed doctrine, I give it up; but arguments from reason only will, I think, never do. I feel obliged by your communication, and the kind and gentlemanlike bearing that runs through your eloquent epistle. Most truly yours, &c. S. N.”

This answer produced another letter from Mr. Armstrong, with the argument from the Bible against the doctrine of the Trinity; but there the correspondence seems to have ended.

He was a great deal occupied at this time with the subject of National Education for Ireland. On April 27th, he writes,—“Went to Dublin in the jaunting car to the meeting at Strand Street. Brilliant success for three parts of my speech on National Education, and then a lapse of memory! However, retrieved myself pretty well, and believe gave much satisfaction.”

The following copy of a letter to Sir John, then Dr. Bowring, also gives another glimpse of his thoughts and studies:

“Kilsharvan, 23rd May, 1835.

“My dear Sir,—Since I had last the pleasure of communicating with you, opportunity has arisen for congratulation at the amended aspect of public affairs. But I own there is appearance of fearful work before the Reformers; and I anticipate your



concurrence in my deep and settled conviction that they will be utterly powerless to stem the tide of Conservative energy and daring, without the all-important protection of the Ballot. Yet, perhaps, the Tories may effect less by daring than by dogged perseverance. Sir Robert Peel has well advised them to beware of 'coups d'état.' In that way they would gain little. The spirit of the nation would be roused; and it is their better policy to wear it out, which they assuredly will do unless we can stimulate the people to press boldly, eagerly, incessantly, for that obvious and necessary complement of the Reform Bill, 'the power of exerting freely, without displeasure or fear thereof,' as Lord Coke says—'without bribery or hope thereof'—the electoral privilege which the Legislature by that Act professed to put into their hands. Every day, every hour I live, the more convinced I am that above all other questions—for all others are involved in it—this is the one most deserving of every thought and effort of Reformers:—*hic labor, hoc opus est!* On the last occasion, as it was indeed the first, that Mr. Grote addressed the House of Commons on this subject, he was good enough to forward me a copy of his truly admirable speech. Whether I am again to be so fortunate as to be similarly favoured I know not; but I shall little regret being forgotten, in the fulness of my joy, should his eloquence and reasoning, gaining strength from the memorable and ever shameful contest in Devon, extort from the wavering liberalism of his hearers, on the next occasion of his appeal to them, a concession of the great question with which his reputation is bound up.

"I have but recently finished the first vol. of 'Deontology,' a subject which has many attractions for me. Yet, decided as I am in Utilitarianism, I am not as yet sure that I have derived, or am about to derive, all the additional light for which I was prepared, on taking up a work on that subject by the great founder, if we may so say, of that system himself. I am yet to learn *how far* the influence of his principles would carry a moral agent in the service of his fellow-creatures. Sympathy, association, habit, these all will do much in the infusion of generous impulses; but upon the strictly Utilitarian principle, as ex-

pounded by Bentham, and considered in the light of self-regarding prudence, in reference to this world only, what is there in the theory of that philosopher which would, I do not say impel, but even *warrant* a man in sacrificing his LIFE for the benefit of his country or of his fellow-creature ? which is a case to which Bentham adverts (Vol. I. pp. 163-4), but of whose OBLIGATION I have as yet found no proof whatever in his system.

“ There is part of a note, very much to the purpose on this subject, in Wainewright’s Vindication of Paley’s Theory of Morals, pp. 109—111 (an excellent work, in my opinion), which puts the thing in its true light, and of which I could wish for the benefit of your opinion. Connected with a *future life*, all is intelligible, and Utilitarianism is carried to its highest perfection. But without this, I can only say with Cicero,—not always in unison with himself, I admit—(Tusc. Quest. i. 15), and very much in the spirit of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 19, ‘ Quo quidem dempto, quis tam esset AMENS qui semper in laboribus et periculis viveret.’ In a Utilitarian Catechism, very ably done (Effingham Wilson, 1830), there would seem to be the same view taken, in Nos. 43, 44, 46 ; a tract conceived in the most absolute spirit of devotion to Bentham, and which I can hardly doubt that you have met with.

“ Speaking of Wainewright’s work, I am reminded of a passage in a letter I lately had from Dr. Channing, to whose attention, owing to some doctrines in his writings of a rather sentimental or stoical complexion, I had taken occasion to recommend that work. In reply, Dr Channing thus writes : ‘ I have read Wainewright’s book, but I am no convert to the doctrine of expediency or utility. I think it at war with our deepest moral convictions. The doctrine is held by good men and wise ones, but I feel as if to me it would be a blighting influence. This is one of the topics on which I wish to write.’

“ And this, assuredly, is a topic upon which his reflecting admirers—and we both rejoice that these are so many—must desire that such a pen as Channing’s should not commit itself to hasty writing or false and feeble reasoning.

“ Pray may I expect the favour of a few lines when at all con-

venient, and meantime be allowed to assure you how much I am," &c. &c.

"June 1. Received a very obliging and interesting letter from Dr. Bowring. His blame and distrust of the Whigs. His interesting reference to Channing."

On June 3rd, there is the following painful entry in his journal: "Smoked till three o'clock this morning, and did not sleep until four;"—the first allusion to the cruel disease which so destroyed the future comfort of his life, and eventually brought him to a comparatively premature end.

"June 12. Finished the Ballot debate. Mr. Grote a giant among babies.

"July 16. Meditating an assault (*in the papers!*) on the 'miserables' at Exeter Hall.

"July 24. Drew up petition to the two Houses for a revisal of the Established Liturgy.

"September 23. Dr. Armstrong (of Dublin) and his two sons spent the evening with us. Interesting account of his Genevan tour and his conversation with Sismondi about myself. Meets Rev. Mr. Channing, nephew of the Doctor. Attends Presbyterian service and catechising in a rural church in the pass of the Jura. Visits Erasmus' school and monument at Basle, the former Basil."

In the month of October, Mr. Armstrong contributed another article to Tait on the "Question of Questions," which excited the same favourable notice as his previous essays.

"December 8. Visited Dr. Armstrong. Much pleased with his delightful manner and conversation. Happy effects at Geneva from the Jubilee. 120 heads of Catholic families have given in their adhesion to that Unitarian church."

Mr. Armstrong being now resident in Dublin, he was a frequent attendant at Strand-Street chapel, where his namesake officiated.

"December 14. Read over some parts of Victor Cousin's somewhat rhapsodical History of Ethics. His mean opinion of English philosophy and idolatry of the German, &c. &c."

And so the year 1835 passed away.

The year 1836 was a year of trouble and anxiety. Mrs. Armstrong's failing health disturbed her husband's mind, and evidently prevented his continuous application to any definite pursuit. Probably with a view to benefit the invalid, a change of residence seems to have been determined on, and his journal, for the first six months, is full of the disheartening and fatiguing pursuit of house-hunting. His time, broken up by these domestic trials, was not however entirely absorbed by them, and reading, thinking and writing on his favourite subjects, filled up his intervals of repose.

His contributions to the public journals seem to be limited during the commencement of this year to a paper called "Church and State Fallacies," which he sent to his frequent correspondent, Mr. A. Fonblanque, of the Examiner, for transmission, if he thought well, to Mr. John S. Mill, then Editor of the London Review. This paper seems to have been characterized by the same powerful handling which distinguished all the productions of his pen. Mr. Fonblanque thus alludes to it in a letter dated March 29, 1836:

"I have forwarded your paper to Mr. John Mill, and send you his answer. The expressions of satisfaction it contains, coming from him, a man most difficult to please, are very strong."

These expressions the possession of Mr. Mill's letter enables me to quote:

"Mr. Armstrong's paper is excellent, and I earnestly hope we may be able to use it—not of course in the number which will appear next Monday, but in the following."

The testimony of such men as Mr. A. Fonblanque and Mr. John S. Mill to the literary ability of Mr. Armstrong is sufficient to stamp its excellence as of no common order; and with this approval of its "artistic" merits, if I may be allowed the expression, it is gratifying to find its spirit equally the subject of praise. "You will see," writes Mr. Fonblanque in another letter, "I have made use of your eloquent mention of Grote, and of your ideas of the Repealers. Both were too good for privacy, and they go forth without anything that can fix their authorship, honourable as is the authorship of such sentiments."

"It is truly gratifying to me that you approve of the spirit and conduct of the London Review," writes Mr. Mill in April, 1836, "and still more so that you are not disinclined to give your aid in rendering it more deserving of that approbation."

Attracted to the subject of American Slavery by Channing's noble tract, he devoted much thought to it about this time, and ever afterwards continued, as his future career will shew, to consider the advance of the cause of the abolitionists one of his chief duties. He writes in his journal on April 11, 1836 :

"Wrote to Dr. Channing on Mackintosh and Slavery. Looked in at the anniversary meeting in Strand-Street chapel.

"Sunday, May 1. Went with S—— to Strand Street. An excellent discourse from Dr. Armstrong, on 1 Tim. vi. 3, 5. Afterwards with I—— to a Quakers' meeting in Eustace Street. Strange infatuation of human nature ! An address from Mrs. Fry, the only exhibition which was *not* disgusting from its insipid fanaticism. Mr. Peasé, the Member for county of Durham, one of the listeners to the so-called inspiration.

"May 3. Looking over my MSS. on Atonement and Theory of Ethics.

"May 19. Writing on natural theology. Attended a lecture by Mr. O'Brien, the Fellow of Trinity College, on the doctrine of the Atonement—a review of Magee and Wardlaw. Promise myself much interest from these lectures.

"June 1. Reading Paley and Sidney Smith's Sermons.

"June 3. After breakfast, reading Barrow,—always elevating, consoling and delightful.

"June 4. Looked over Rev. Mr. Woodward's very ingenious volume of Essays, &c.—his thoughts on limited omnipotence of God. Also read an Oxford pamphlet, by a Mathematical Professor, on the Hampden controversy, which very strongly resembles, and will, perhaps, be not less memorable than, the Bangorian controversy 100 years ago. It is honourable to Whig policy that, for a second time during the period of its sway, orthodoxy and illiberalism, in their efforts to oppose the ameliorating spirit of the times, have so thoroughly exposed the weakness of their cause, and their insuperable alliance with that

Popery, in its most revolting pretensions, which they affect to decry, and weary the public ear by incessantly abusing and denouncing.

"Sunday, June 5. To Strand Street with S——. An admirably eloquent and touching sermon from Dr. Drummond, on the text, 'Felix trembled.'

"June 13. Attended Dr. O'Brien's lecture. He by no means improves as he gets on. His *confidence* in the perplexities of the orthodox scheme not a little amusing to a mind unsubdued into allegiance to human creeds, articles and fictions. Curious specimen of the same temper, though somewhat more ferocious, in Martin Luther, whose works I this day looked over in College library, and whose assurance on the *real conversion* of Christ's body into bread, &c., was scarcely more extravagant, and not a whit more warranted by Scripture, in the view taken by the great Reformer, than the wily and weak deductions of his right orthodox successor in T. C., D.

"June 23. To Dr. O'Brien's concluding lecture. Some very harsh, but certainly not undeserved, strictures on the 'Improved Version.' Passed some time in College library, perusing Dr. Burton of Oxford's works. Found a distinguished mention of a work of mine in Millikin's Catalogue in College library.

"June 30. Spent a couple of hours in College library, but could neither find Shelley nor Knowles (subjects for evening discussion); but discovered a very elaborate and ingenious work, called the 'Balance' of Trinitarian and Unitarian evidence from the Bible, by another Knowles. Pleasant evening at Hardwicke Street with Literary Society.

"July 5. Spent an hour at National Association Committee Exchange, intending to speechify about Reform in the Lords, but did not find matters *ripe* enough."

House-hunting was not the only domestic trouble that, through his wife's ill health, fell to the lot of Mr. Armstrong; servants added their too frequent ingratitude and obstinacy to the list; and it is delightfully illustrative of his character to see how amiably he bears all these annoyances, never uttering a murmur at the constant interruption of his time, which he could otherwise

have turned to such good account. During July, however, he found a house to suit him, and on the 18th he writes in his journal:

"In the evening *once more* commenced to pack up my unfortunate books, and sat up late in ecstasy with the masterly speech of Grote on the Ballot. Hyperion to a set of satyrs! What ineffably imbecile creatures are those Whigs!

"July 19. Mrs. A. and George took leave of Leeson Street. The former still very poorly. Finished and wrote out some of Dr. O'Brien's most orthodox volume of University sermons. By way of *relief* from which, read over some exquisite pages of my ever-consoling and exalting teacher and monitor, Channing. The only experience I have ever had of anything approximating to the sublimity and joy of 'heaven upon earth,' have been the blessed moments I have given to the compositions of this glorious and all but inspired being! Finished Landor's lively but rather eccentric brochure on the Church. Read with extreme interest the Addresses and Replies between Messrs. Holmes, &c. and the Non-subscribing Presbyterians, in Christian Reformer.

"July 22. Read beautiful essay on Rational Faith, in Christian Teacher.

"Aug. 15. Could not resist my impulse for a long ramble on this lovely day. Mrs. A. complaining very much all the evening. Finished at her bed-side the incomparable Baltimore Sermon of Dr. Channing, and went to bed full of joy and the peace of God.

"Aug. 23. Walked into town about those plaguy servants again! In the evening read some interesting papers in Christian Teacher and Christian Reformer, viz., Mr. Martineau's new work on Interpretation, &c. Sir H. Davy's life—his marvellous notions of religious instinct!"

From this time Mrs. Armstrong's health, so long gradually failing, became rapidly worse, and on the 7th September she was alarmingly ill. On the 8th, Mr. A. makes the following entry in his journal, which with others that will follow shew his heart as it deserves to be seen,—deeply, tenderly affectionate, yet bearing with a pious and Christian fortitude the trials his Heavenly Father sent:

"No improvement in our poor patient. Sent for Sir James at nine o'clock. . . . . About half-past two o'clock, sweet C——y invited me to kneel down and pray with her in my own room to the God of mercies, in behalf of our poor sufferer and of ourselves—that she might be comforted, and we be sanctified, under the sad visitation by which we felt ourselves bowed down ! Holy aspirations and a consciousness of dependence for outward and inward succour on a merciful Maker, were, I know, experienced by my dear wife: for at one time she said *earnestly* to me (I alone being present), that she felt that 'though walking in the valley of the shadow of death, He was to her her rod and her staff.' Oh that to her and to us this blessed succour may not be wanting in our hour of need ! And when, O God in Christ ! is that moment in which we do not, to the uttermost, need thy holy presence and thy all-comforting help !"

Another day the poor patient hovered between life and death. All the remedies that science knew were tried to avert the blow ; but all human aid was vain ; and on Saturday, the 10th of September, the Giver of life and death dismissed her softly, tenderly, from her pilgrimage on earth, after seven years of shattered health. Of this amiable lady and her agreeable manners and conversation, the following letter from Mrs. Henry Ware, Jun., gives an interesting picture. The visit alluded to in this letter is that mentioned in her husband's *Life* which was noticed in the early part of this Memoir.

"Cambridge, U.S., Oct. 4, 1831. -

"My dear Madam,—An acquaintance of little more than twelve hours may seem too short to give one the liberty of thus addressing you ; but when I think how lasting has been its influence upon me, I feel as if this gave me the right, if it were only to tell you how much good you have done me. Many and various have been the trials and perplexities which have been my lot since I parted from you, and very often has the recollection of our long conversation the evening I was with you recurred to my mind, bringing encouragement and animation. Often have I wished I could tell you some of my experiences ; for I knew you would sympathize in them, and delight to see in them a



confirmation of your favourite principle, that strength is always given when it is needed. I shall never forget my delightful evening with you, or I hope cease to profit by the lessons you gave me in the detail of your life. I cannot hope that it should be remembered by you with the same interest, but it would give me much satisfaction to know that you remembered it at all. I hope that either from yourself or Mr. Armstrong we shall some day hear of you and your family. The enthusiasm of one of your daughters on the subject of America and Dr. Channing, gave me some hopes that circumstances might lead to her visiting our country. Should any of your family ever do so, I hope we should have the pleasure of seeing them. She may be glad to hear that Dr. Channing's health is very good; and as he weaned himself so much from home as to pass last winter in the West Indies, there is some hope that he will be induced to re-visit Europe, now that he could do it under pleasanter auspices than before.

"You will be glad to hear that my husband's health is much better than for three years past. His tour was of service to him, although the benefit did not appear at once. He has now commenced the duties of his professorship, including occasional preaching, and is constantly gaining strength. The little Roman we brought home with us is an interesting child of 18 months, and our other three are at home with us in fine health. I was confined to my chamber during seven months of last winter with a complaint of the lungs, but am now quite well. The clouds that have so long obscured our horizon seem to have dispersed, but we rejoice in the brightness around us with a sober, chastened joy, remembering that *change* is the watchword of this life. Remember me most kindly to Mr. A. and your daughters, and believe me yours very truly,

MARY L. WARE."

The record of poor Mr. Armstrong's agony of sorrow is too sacred for publication; but, the first violence subsided, it is a consoling, elevating lesson to all called to bear the same trials to read the following account of the Sunday that followed the awful day :

"Sunday, Sept. 11. After a late breakfast, all the maids assembled with us in the parlour, to join in the service of the day, with an added prayer from Mr. Hutton's very excellent book of devotions, and an admirably appropriate but short discourse by Houghton on the 'Recognition of each other in a Future State.'"

This is the last entry in his journal for 1836. His friend Mr. Blanco White was one of the first to write him a letter of sympathy and consolation,—a letter so interesting and original, it will be read with pleasure here.

"22, Upper Stanhope Street, Liverpool,  
Sept. 22, 1836.

"My dear Sir,—Few minutes have elapsed since your letter of the 18th instant reached my hands; and nothing but absolute impossibility of attending to it would make me delay an answer. You have indeed been in my thoughts for several days; and I had fully intended taking the first opportunity of assuring you that my grateful recollection of you does not fade away.

"Your present affliction, alas! offers me the occasion I was looking for. How thankful I should be if I could afford you any consolation! But my reflections and experience have taught me that every source of good is within us. The kingdom of God is literally within our souls. I am fully persuaded that men waste their intellectual and moral strength by seeking, not only external means of sanctification and faith—which is the grossest kind of superstition—but by having recourse to the *imagination*, in religious matters, instead of leaning chiefly on the higher faculties of the mind, that pure reason—by pure, I do not mean to exclude sentiment—which is the sanctuary, the only oracle of God among men. To whose guidance did Jesus commit his disciples? Was it not to the Divine Spirit? And where can we find that Divine guide but in the internal sanctuary? Oh! that orthodoxy—scholastic orthodoxy, I mean—had not, on the one hand, perverted the simplicity of that divine notion, and enthusiasm, on the other, had not assimilated it to madness! God is certainly within us; his spirit, his light, his word, or

*logos*, resides in the soul of every man 'that cometh into this world.' It resides there, not in the character of an infallible oracle—for man in his present state is incapable of infallible light—but of *conscientious reasonableness and holiness*. Man's elevated call in this life is to improve his perception of the light within, by faithfulness to it, by the sacrifice of his grosser *self*, by increasing love of that *wisdom* and that *sanctity* of which he sees a pure though faint ray. This moral course kept up amidst the storms of life, is the faith, the trust, recommended in the gospel. This is the rock on which the true Christian should build. All the *sensible* and *material* pictures which mystics and dogmatizers offer to the vulgar of all ranks, are worse than sand.

"You ask me to state the experience and conviction of my old age; and I will obey you without hesitation. I have found during the whole course of my long schooling in this world, that the attempts to realize a future life *in the imagination* never failed to increase pain and anguish within me. The reason of this is clear to me; the images to which we fly in our distress must be faint and imperfect compared with those which external reality has left in us; they have the power of adding, if I may so say, reality to our loss, and our feelings revolt at the attempted substitution. Whatever images of that kind we form, must, besides, contain a great deal of error; for our knowledge of the invisible world is imperfect and *purely intellectual*, i. e. arising not from images, but *reason*. Revelation is indeed addressed to the highest faculty, and not to the inferior and totally material, in its pictures, as being the reflections of the sensitive and visible world. Weak minds find consolation, or rather amusement, in the visions of the fancy; but where the reasonable principle, the true spirit is awake, such pictures can only produce dissatisfaction, and, in seasons of pain, even an angry feeling of incredulity. This appears a cold and unfeeling doctrine to persons who have been intoxicated with the artificial excitement of mysticism. But I can speak for myself, a man whose feelings have never been thought obtuse by those best acquainted with them. My sense of devotion, my hope, my trust in God, my acquiescence

in his providence, my certainty that I am safe in his hands, though I cannot understand his inscrutable plans of moral government—my religion, in a word, was never so active, so real to my own consciousness, as it has been since I thoroughly understood what I conceive to be the very essence of Christianity—the purely spiritual trust which I have stated to you. The primitive Quakers perceived it; but unfortunately the excitement of the times obscured their view with the fumes of enthusiasm. But I feel certain that the same truth will re-appear in full brilliancy when the time for the second Reformation shall have arrived.

“Excuse, my dear Sir, the necessarily imperfect enunciation of a most sublime truth, especially within the limits of a letter. May God make it perfectly clear to you, and thus afford the most effectual consolation in your affliction!

“Believe me, &c. &c.,

J. BLANCO WHITE.”

We must leave Mr. Armstrong now till the commencement of the year 1837, when he thus begins a new journal:

“Sunday, January 1. God has permitted me—but oh! in what altered circumstances from the last!—to arrive at the opening of another new year, and to unfold another page in the mighty scroll of Time.

“How many are the minute incidents which stimulate the recollections of one who journeys on through life without the accustomed and the loved companions of his pilgrimage! The sound of a new year never before so grated on my ear. The announcement of 1837 reminds that it was never heard by that ear which had caught for so many years before of our joint existence the happy greetings of the loving and the loved! . . . With such imaginings are our earthly natures fain to be busied and oppressed. But amidst all the pains and perils, vicissitudes and disasters, of our onward and downward path through life, there is one who has said to us, ‘Let not your hearts be troubled;’ ‘I will not leave you comfortless.’ And true it is we have need of this word of comfort. But oh! how doubly blessed its relief,

when it comes to us from lips *about to be closed for ever*; assuring us thus of the balm it yields to the *sufferer we love*, ere it passes to us to assuage the griefs and correct the murmurings of our poor rebellious hearts! Another year having called for another diary, I now resume, if not the useful and important, at least the convenient habit of noting the events and occupations of my secluded life, in humble resignation to the past visitations of my Heavenly Father, and in believing reliance on his goodness and direction for such time to come as his merciful will may be pleased to spare me.

“The first day of this year was opened by me in family prayer with my children, who afterwards went to church. I remained at home to finish a letter to Dr. Channing, begun so long ago as 15th of October, which I had at length the pleasure of doing this day, after having read the service of the day and looked over some pages of Porteus’s Sermons.

“Dined at M——’s with the children, as we had already done on Christmas-day, when for the first time I received the Sacrament in the Presbyterian form at Strand Street, G—— and I—— being spectators of by far the most interesting, solemn and affecting celebration of that blessed festival in which I had ever before taken part. Truly was I gratified that my children were present on so memorable, and to them as well as to myself, I trust, so instructive an occasion.”

The two following extracts from the letter to Dr. Channing, referred to in this entry in Mr. Armstrong’s diary, are copied in his commonplace-book :

“Two passages from a long letter lately addressed by me to the Rev. Dr. Channing, January, 1837.

“I mentioned to you, I think, in my last communication, that I was not satisfied with Mackintosh; who appeared to me, except in some brilliant sketches of character, to have exhibited his metaphysical powers of mind, and his capacity for *clear thinking and writing*, to small advantage in his much-lauded ‘Dissertation.’ This, I think, is well proved in a work entitled ‘A Fragment on Mackintosh’ (London, 1835),—an intended vindication of Bentham and Mill,—not conceived in the most

amiable spirit, I admit, but, however objectionable in point of style, containing a great deal of severe reasoning as well as severe epithets. It does, I must own, seem to me that, in treating of the theory of Morals, Mackintosh and his Scottish teachers *do not analyze sufficiently far*. For my part, I can fancy no definition of morality sustainable but one, and that is, that it is *a calculation of consequences*; which calculation, however, is in most instances superseded by *habit*,—both communities and individuals acquiring the power on the one hand of acting, on the other of characterizing acts, instantaneously and by impulse, in a manner, yet agreeably to rules which the general intelligence, guided by the experience of effects, from time to time has stamped with its approbation as fit and proper.

“I have a suspicion that the Stoical rigours—(let us take, for example, the case of self-sacrifice even to the *certain* loss of life, not the mere *hazard* of it, in behalf of another,—and this self-renunciation comprising, in the consciousness of the heroic impulse, its whole and sole, or at least its abundant and all-sufficient reward)—I suspect that these extreme notions of that lofty sect—and in all justice to Epicurus I think we may include his philosophical ‘tranquillity,’ in despite of pains and dangers, in the same category—must have been very much owing to their vague, obscure, distrustful, or altogether rejected belief in *a future state* of being, which not unnaturally led them to the exaggerated doctrine of the absolutely perfect reward—in all cases whatsoever—of virtue considered in itself alone.

“And, by the bye, extending the notion of ‘utility’ to a life beyond the present—that is, understanding it of *happiness on the whole* and in the long run—can we easily reconcile the two following very remarkable passages of Cicero: ‘Si non ipso honesto movemur, sed utilitate aliquâ aut fructu, calidi sumus non boni’ (De Legibus, i.). Yet again: ‘Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis et existit maxime et apparet facillime’—(precisely Moses in Heb. xi. 25—27)—‘quo quidem dempto, quis tam esset amens qui semper in laboribus et periculis viveret?’ (Tusc. Quæst. i. 15).

"I must confess that, of all questions, that of the origin of the moral character of actions, has ever been to me one of the most curious. And upon this, as upon all other subjects—in morals as well as in theology—I wish to be led as far as possible by the *reason* of things. This, Locke—nay, this, indeed, you have taught me, or rather confirmed me in. In truth, I can see no end to the mischief, because no limit to the inconsistency, of consulting any other guide. Give men up to their feelings, and you may as well expect uniformity of sentiment and of action, as you could regularity from the winds, or rationality from a nervous woman or a peevish child. But once put the feelings under the guidance of reason, and then in exact proportion as intellect and the capacity of measuring *consequences* are cultivated in each community of the earth, just so far, and only so far, will a local uniformity, as eventually we may hope will a *universal* uniformity, of moral principle be attained.

"Nor let it be supposed, as slanderously reported of utilitarians, that we, any more than the most exalted sentimentalists, undervalue the aid of *feeling*. Far, very far from it. We only contend for assigning it *its proper place* in the moral economy; acknowledging with all readiness its supreme, nay indispensable importance, as an *impelling*, though not a *discerning* power; and a standard of morality—(however undevelopèd or imperfect here and there in its progress)—once erected, yielding with all humility to its high prerogative of '*accusing or else excusing*,' in proportion to our conformity or non-conformity to the accepted standard. \* \* \* \* \*

"Does the Atonement still occupy your thoughts, or rather your *intent*s? On that prolific source of the woes which have oppressed, and the crimes which have overwhelmed, the Christian world, inasmuch as it has hidden the true character of God from the eyes of men, and tended to debase their morality, from the impure model it has suggested for their worship—on that subject, no less than on ethics, so nearly connected with it, how needful to engage with the most severe application of the critical and reasoning powers! I wish I were in full possession of your theory on the doctrine of *rewards*. In spite of, nay in open

rebellion, if not to his Calvinism, to his anti-pelagian predilections, Dr. Chalmers (an elaborate though acute declaimer) perpetually recurs, in his 'Natural Theology,' to the *natural rewards* of virtue, no less than to the natural penalties of vice. In truth, the one is correlative to the other. Well, then, if this be so, where is the ground for supposing *intercession* to be even necessary or even applicable, in procuring the *former*? Will it be said, in order to ensure their duration and intensity? But if there is to be any reward at all in the future world, *must* it not be *eternal*? for wherefore, in any imaginable period of their enjoyment, *destroy* the *sanctified*, as the contrary supposes! And then as to *degree*, is it not equally clear that the beatitude conferred must be in exact proportion to the *capacity* of the recipient? He is as happy as, in his individual progress in purity and holiness, he can be; and no *intercession could*, in the nature of things, render him more so. So easily, as it appears to me, is this last lingering notion as to the Saviour's mediation in its *propitiatory* character put to flight!" \* \* \*

Mr. Armstrong now began to look anxiously about him for some suitable employment to which he could devote his time and talents. Hitherto, since his final separation from the Established Church, the broken health of his wife, the frequent change of residence, and other circumstances, had interfered to prevent his steady application to any particular sphere of duty; but now he was free for any good cause that should invite the exercise of the full powers of his accomplished manhood.

The Secretaryship of the National Board of Education for Ireland appeared a suitable position for him to fill, and he put himself in communication with some gentlemen and noblemen likely to be able to forward his views; among others, the present Earl of Carlisle, then Lord Morpeth and Secretary for Ireland, who replied to his application by the following polite note:

"Phoenix Park, Sept. 29.

"Dear Sir,—In the event of a vacancy occurring in the post of Secretary to the Education Board, I shall be quite ready to communicate your request to them; but I feel it is a matter



upon which the most unlimited discretion must be reposed in the Commissioners. Of your individual qualifications no one could harbour any doubt. I have the honour to be, &c. &c.,

MORPETH."

But there was another mission to which he turned with increasing interest, and his diary records many conversations with his friend Dr. Armstrong "on the ministry of the Unitarian church."

In the mean time his life was spent as we have seen it for some time past,—in visits to inspect the schools of the National Board, correspondence with public men and men of letters on literature and politics, in study, and the ordinary duties of a parent and a citizen.

Of one of his tours of inspection to the National mixed schools, in which he took such a lively interest, he writes on March 17,—  
 "In no one place during our visits, our very interesting visits, this week, did we find anything bordering on the least desire designedly to infringe the excellent rules of the National Board. On the contrary, the greatest simplicity of intention, and the most laudable desire to conduct the schools to the satisfaction of the Board and of every individual or denomination interested in the success of this great and beneficent scheme." A gratifying testimony this to the complete success of the unsectarian system, and to the possibility of giving religious instruction in national or parish schools without interference with the conscientious scruples of any scholar or parent.

"March 23. Read some heart-comforting pages in Jenks. How often, alas! is my poor heart tortured with worldly regrets, and how surely, though not always durably, do the blessed satisfactions of pure religion reconcile me to the fleeting pains and disappointments and difficulties of my appointed lot!

"March 29. Went to the sheds of Clontarf to visit a person supposed to be dying of asthma: took him some pipes and stramonium, in hope that smoking might do something for him.

"April 2. Went to vestry at Strand Street to assist in preparing proceedings for anniversary meeting. A resolution on National Education committed to my charge.

"April 4. Read Education Reports, 1, 2, 3. Called at the office in Marlborough Street. Near 1200 schools and 153,000 scholars.

"April 9. Went to Strand Street to hear Mr. Tayler, of Manchester, at twelve o'clock; but finding he was not to preach until half-past two, proceeded to St. George's to hear Mr. Robert Montgomery. I never saw so prodigious a crowd in any church, and really, so far as I was able to hear, without any very overpowering inducement, so far as the rhetorical powers of the preacher were the cause of their coming together. He was confident and voluble to a remarkable degree, but without any striking matter, or anything like the intonation and graces of true oratory. Returned from thence to a very thin and languid attendance at Eustace Street. Rather a reason, I thought, for *kindling energy* and tenfold exertion in a good cause, than for any desponding anticipations as to the ultimate reception of a pure theology throughout the Christian world.

"April 10. At seven o'clock to our tea-meeting at Northumberland Buildings. Delighted to find it a complete cram,—not less, probably, than 220 people, filling the tables and rooms to overflowing. Dr. Drummond's quotation of O'Connell's favourite lines, 'Great, glorious and free,' &c., and his significant remark thereon. My friend Dr. Armstrong's allusions to Dr. Stokes and myself. His narrative of Emlyn's sufferings. But the speech of speeches was that of Mr. Porter, which, although almost an impromptu, was alike instructive for its matter and admirable for its eloquence and energy. Unitarianism remarked by him to be an unzealous because a charitable religion; but by a masterly turn this able speaker shewed that this itself should be a cause of noblest zeal and energy, in order to spread through society a religion so full of peace and good-will. From its very *charity*, 'twere charity itself to carry it to the ends of the earth. Broke up for adjournment at near eleven o'clock, so my poor turn has still to come.

"April 11. To dinner at Mr. H. Hutton's to meet Mr. Tayler, of Manchester, Dr. Anster, &c. &c. Much conversation with Mr. T. about Blanco White, German theology, interpretation of Scripture, miracles, &c. &c.

"April 17. To meeting at Northumberland Rooms. Business opened with an affair on National Education from me.

"April 26. Excellent strictures in Sun newspaper on accession of President Van Buren, who had stained his inaugural address by a positive declaration of his hostility to all attempts to rid the Union of the accursed stigma.

"April 30. Went to Strand Street. Attended committee there. Requested to publish my speech on Education.

"May 6. Writing to Mr. J. S. Mill on politics and ethics.

"June 6. Read Mr. Martineau's 'Rationale of Religious Enquiry.' Some passages of surpassing power and brilliancy."

Mr. Armstrong's leaning towards the ministry of the Unitarian church as his future employment, encouraged by his friend and namesake, Dr. Armstrong, was now rapidly determining him to take the final step in adopting a mission evidently marked out for him by its accordance with his tastes, his talents and his convictions. We shall see as we proceed the humility, sincerity and ardent zeal he took with him, when he finally entered himself a public labourer in this vineyard of the Lord, which he resolved to do on an opening occurring for him with a small Presbyterian congregation at a place called Summerhill. The entries in his journal best tell the story of his heart and mind.

"June 7. Called on Dr. Armstrong in Hardwicke Street, who laid before me the result of his visit to Summerhill. My new destiny rapidly ripening! The Lord in mercy be my Guide and Helper!

"June 8. Reflecting much on life and its changeableness; but humbly reposing in hope and trust on Him who is alone without shadow of change.

"June 9. Went at half-past eleven to a meeting of Synod at Dr. Armstrong's in Hardwicke Street, assembled for the special purpose of admitting me a licentiate of their body, preparatory to my call to the congregation of Summerhill, in the county of Meath.

"May that God and Father of all spirits, 'without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy,' turn this great and solemn change in the condition of my life to a blessing on myself and

others! May my soul understand the great duty which is now laid on it, and may I in all earnestness devote myself to the work to which my Saviour has graciously called me, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living! Amen and amen.

“Dined at W. D——’s with C——, F—— and M——. Had some singularly vehement discussions after dinner on Toryism and Democracy, the theory of municipal institutions, &c. *Incompatibility* of the objections drawn from the ignorance and incompetency of the people, and the effect of corporations as *training* schools for the exercise of political rights. The people are unfit for government because they are ignorant; while the best possible means of removing the ignorance are pertinaciously denied! Power and wealth admitted to be abusive; yet the *disinterestedness* of an *oligarchy* maintained! The House of Lords extolled as the most glorious and sagacious of bodies, and yet the Reform Bill, which they opposed almost to the risk of a national convulsion, admitted to have been fit and expedient! And yet it is into such hands as these which we Radicals are required to surrender the right of governing us according to their own very enlightened and irresponsible wills! It is by the party who maintain and would act upon these luminous contradictions we are complacently asked to suffer the country to be ruled!

“June 11. In the house all day, looking over my old sermons, and composing an address for congregation at Summerhill.

“June 12. A curious intimation to me from Dr. A. ‘Domine dirige nos.’

“June 13. Called on Dr. A. at Tyrrel’s. Walked with him to Four Courts. Long discussion on settlement in England.

“June 16. Received a letter and present of books from my admirable friend Dr. Channing.

“June 24. Looking over my address and sermon for Summerhill, whither I this day went with Dr. A., first calling at his house to attend the Literary Society Committee, and to take an early dinner before our departure at half-past three o’clock per caravan. Arrived at about seven o’clock at Summerhill: took tea at the Rev. minister’s and slept at the inn. Read my papers

before bed, and, in deep anxiety and humility, and oppressed by unutterable recollections, commended myself to the keeping and the mercy of the Great God.

"June 25, Sunday. Up for breakfast at Mr. Trotter's, the minister. After breakfast, walked and talked a good deal in the garden with Dr. A. Took a saunter by myself in the sweet, quiet fields. Went back to the inn for my gown and sermon—prayed fervently—and joined the little party at the chapel. About 25 souls collected! My discourses proved most acceptable, and after service I was feelingly complimented by my kind friend, Dr. A., with whom I took a long walk in Lord Langford's demesne, talking about my expected invitation to Bristol.

"June 28. Walked about Ashlumney all day, and conversed very agreeably with Mrs. R. T——, who shewed me some curious family letters, &c. R. T—— returned from Navan about three o'clock, and then walked with me, thus affording me an opportunity of disclosing to him the object of my mission to Summerhill. His surprise at, and (as might be expected) not very encouraging reception of, the intelligence. Strangely uninformed and unreasoning condition of his mind on the subject of Dissent, &c.; and his odd offer to me of the curacy of Navan.

"July 1. Went to meeting of clerical *brethren* in Hardwicke Street, and there received my formal invitation to Summerhill.

"July 2, Sunday. Address and sermon at Strand Street, to a very large congregation. Introduced to Dr. Lowell, a Boston divine, the friend and brother minister of Channing, who with his family had only just arrived in Ireland, and were present at my introduction to the Presbyterian pulpit on this day. Called on dear C—— (whose presence in the chapel had nearly unmanned me) after service."

A few days after this his first appearance as a Unitarian minister before an important congregation, he received the following letter from Dr. Carpenter, of Bristol:

"Bristol, July 5, 1837.

"My dear Sir,—You are so far acquainted with the communications that have taken place between myself and Dr. Arm-

strong, that you cannot feel surprised at my availing myself of your still unengaged circumstances, to solicit the favour of a visit from you for a week or ten days, during which I hope you will occupy the pulpit in Lewin's Mead as much as you find you can, without too much fatigue. The congregation are well aware of your sacrifice to a high principle of religious truth and duty; and are prepared, by a knowledge of your character and talents, to shew you respectful attention.

"I received Dr. Armstrong's letter, despatched after you had preached at Strand-Street chapel, yesterday morning; and I lose no time in presenting my invitation, after learning that such a visit will be very acceptable to my friends here.

"If you can favour us by coming over so as to preach next Sunday week, the 16th, and also on the 23rd, it will be particularly desirable; since after that time it is expected that our people will, in several instances, be leaving their homes for the sea-side, &c.

"I shall be happy to see you in my own house, my vacation giving me the power of offering you our plain accommodations, accompanied with that sentiment which you saw in part some years ago,—our sincere and respectful regard.

"Your reply will be awaited with some anxiety; and I hope you will favour me with one as soon as your convenience will allow.

"I remain, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,  
LANT CARPENTER."

This invitation Mr. Armstrong accepted, and prepared to set off on his journey to Bristol. But before he goes on a mission so new to him, involving such a change of life and associations, we will glance at him amidst old scenes and recollections.

"Sunday, July 9. Walked to Mount Sandford church. . . . On returning, stopped at the house in Bushfield Avenue, once intended to be taken for the residence of my dear wife. Examined it with melancholy interest, and especially the bath and bed room intended for herself. Oh God! how poignant is a separation for ever!—how terrible the warnings of what nothings we are when

all our earthly schemes are thus broken in upon and scattered to the dust ! Leaving this spot, proceeded to our former house in Upper Leeson Street to drink deeper into the memory of the past, by sitting in that very room where this exact day twelvemonths I had read the service of the day to my poor darling before driving over to Clontarf, whither I now determined to go in order to complete the commemoration of incidents never to be forgotten by me.

“ Having reached Clontarf, called at Mr. Gaussen’s for the keys of the house which on this day twelvemonths I had first entered with my poor wife. It was much such another lovely day as the present, and she sat down at the parlour window much fatigued, and very, very poorly in health and spirits. The scene was present to my mind with a perfect and all too faithful distinctness. I then went to the drawing-room, to the pretty window where her dear eyes used to gaze on the charming view of the light-house, bay and mountains, until they would often fill with secret anticipations that soon—oh God, how soon!—those earthly delights would be hid from her eyes. From thence, by the open door between, to that fatal bedside where I had stood and kneeled to watch the last ebbing breath of one of the best of women—my truest of friends, my companion, my wife. After tarrying some minutes in this now empty and desolate apartment, yet full of reminiscences for me of unutterable interest, I retired from this scene of sorrow and anguish, and repaired to the grave of my darling, in the beautiful churchyard of Clontarf, to kneel upon it, to pray upon it, and pour out my soul in mingled lamentations for my loss, and religious trust in my merciful Maker, whose we are, whether living or dead, and whose saving power will redeem us from the grave and re-unite all fond hearts, if not in earthly, yet in heavenly and everlasting bonds of love.

“ Leaving this dear and sacred spot, I slowly walked homewards and dressed for dinner at C——’s. J—— C—— dined there ; —— was expected, but did not come. It is now not improbable I shall leave Ireland without ever having had the small compliment of a visit, or even inquiry at my door, from

one who *was* my very early friend and companion, closely and doubly connected with me by marriage, living in the same town with me for a period of twelve months of mourning; and yet all this while, officially occupied as he was, ever ready to manifest attentions in every direction where fashion and consequence and acceptance with the wealthy and the great were to be cultivated and maintained. Such is the world! O my soul, be thou not of it!"

Mr. Armstrong proceeded to Cork to pay some visits, and embarked from that port for Bristol, on Tuesday, the 18th of July. His arrival and doings there are duly recorded in his journal.

"July 19. Landed at Bristol at near seven o'clock, and took my things to Dr. Carpenter's in a fly.

"July 20. Walked into Bristol to visit Dr. Carpenter, &c. Dined at old Mr. Palmer's. A large family party there.

"July 21. Drove at five o'clock through a delicious neighbourhood with Dr. Carpenter to Mr. Webb Hall's, at Sneyd Park, to dinner. Conversation about Rammohun Roy with old Mrs. Estlin. Interesting correspondence read to us by Dr. C. with Lord Holland and Bishop Stanley.

"July 22. With Dr. C. to visit Lewin's Mead chapel, the schools, almshouse, &c. The infant school very interesting.

"July 23, Sunday. With much prayer commended myself to Almighty God for the services of this very remarkable day in my life. At half-past eleven o'clock arrived, with Mr. Russell Carpenter, at Lewin's Mead chapel. Robed in the vestry and took my seat in a quiet pew until the period came for my succeeding Dr. C. in the pulpit. Delivered from thence my address and sermon—same as at Strand Street—and found I succeeded in giving marked satisfaction to a crowded congregation. Dined at home; and in the evening again preached for three-quarters of an hour, giving out hymn, &c., like an old hand. Warmly complimented by my very kind hearers. Tea at Mr. Palmer's; supper at Dr. Carpenter's.

"July 24. Breakfasted with Mr. Henry Palmer at Nelson Villa, Clifton. Long conversation with him after breakfast. Proceeded with him and Mr. Wm. Carpenter to his father's, old



Mr. P., and went through town to the hustings at the Custom-House Square, where the election was going on with great vigour and animation. Old gentleman and his son plumped for Berkeley—great cheering for them among the people. Odd harangue to old Mr. P. from the queer (John Bull) auctioneer! After a good deal of delay to observe the humour of this to me perfectly novel scene, it was proposed by Messrs. Palmer that we should adjourn to the village of Ashton, on the other side of the river, to take some strawberries and cream. It was hardly credible that so exquisite a retirement could be found so close to the crowded and busy scene which we had just left. In this village, celebrated in Miss Edgeworth's story of *Lazy Lawrence*, there were, probably, not more than half-a-dozen scattered cottages, close to the splendid demesne of Sir John Ashton Smith; but among these was pre-eminent for neatness and loveliness that cottage of cottages, in the gardens of which were a series of arbours, in the centre and largest of which we sat down on this very broiling day to a repast never surpassed for the flavour and richness of the fruit and cream which were abundantly served to us. After a delay of about an hour in this lovely spot, we walked back to the ferry, and, parting with my friends, I took my berth in the 'City of Bristol,' to sail for Cork next day. Meantime the election was going on with various prognostications by the respective parties. At length, after much contradiction and uncertainty, the hour of four o'clock announced that the Liberals had crowned their arduous exertions by a majority of 63 for Mr. Berkeley, and the approach of the triumphing band and procession soon confirmed the tidings. Just at this time of the day a most welcome and very heavy shower—as if to appease the heat of parties as well as of pavements—fell down upon the city and citizens, alike embroiled with the heat of the day and the election fray.

"July 25. Proceeded in a fly to get on board the *City of Bristol* at half-past eleven o'clock. The sail down the river delightful, and on arriving at Portishead, found there my kind friends, a large family pleasure-party of Palmers, &c., on the look-out for me. Whereupon a very active interchange of signals

by waving of handkerchiefs took place, and some audible hurrahs and farewells."

Back at Cork, he passes the first day of his arrival "in anxious meditation on his apparent success at Bristol." "God in his mercy," he writes in his journal, "direct and guide, and above all things sanctify and endue, me with power to do and suffer his holy will!"

After a sojourn of a few days at Cork, he received a letter from the Treasurer of the Lewin's Mead congregation, enclosing the following resolution of the Committee:

"With the view of giving the Lewin's Mead congregation a further opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Rev. George Armstrong's qualifications for the pastoral office, he be invited again to come to Bristol to officiate for three or four Sundays."

Mr. Armstrong replied in due course.

"A. Palmer, Esq.

"August 15, 1837.

"Dear Sir,—Although not *quite* prepared for the nature of the communication conveyed in your letter, which I only received late yesterday, yet I am so sensible of the many requisites, independent of pulpit duty, to be expected in a minister undertaking the very responsible charge of your congregation, that I can easily understand the anxiety naturally felt on their part to be adequately acquainted with the competency of the person with whom they might think of soliciting a connection. Yet it is just, in regard to the requisites in question, that in the commencement of a ministry so perfectly novel to me, I should be disposed to feel most diffident, and especially in need of the guidance and assistance of an experienced colleague. Under all the circumstances, you will pardon me if I cannot on the instant undertake to send you a definitive answer, and request the indulgence of reserving myself for a consultation with my friends in Dublin, whom I shall forthwith proceed to visit for that purpose.—With every good wish and very sincere thanks, believe me to remain, &c. &c.,

GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

His Dublin friends encouraged him to accept the proposition from Bristol, and he wrote to the Committee through their Treasurer to that effect, suggesting six months as his probationary sojourn with the congregation of Lewin's Mead. The Committee replied that it was not in their power to engage any supply for Dr. Carpenter's pulpit for so long a period as six months; at the same time inviting Mr. Armstrong to preach in their chapel for three or four Sundays at a time most convenient to himself. To this he acceded, and fixed on an early Sunday in the following October as the period of his arrival in Bristol. In the mean time he was occupied in the preparation of prayers and sermons, and the studies and thoughts suggested by his new sphere of duty. The Secretaryship of the National Board of Education was not, however, relinquished, and there are memorandums in his journal of more correspondence with Lord Morpeth, Archbishop Whately and others, upon that subject.

On the 10th of October, he left Dublin for Bristol; and on the 12th, his journal contains an account of his safe arrival at No. 11, Park Place, Clifton, where comfortable rooms had been prepared for him. On the 14th, he gives an interesting account of his feelings on surveying the beauties of Clifton Downs.

"After looking over my sermon, &c. for to-morrow, walked out at half-past twelve with a letter from Dublin for Miss Hall at Sneyd Park, crossing the Downs and Durdham Common, beyond which the approach through the fields was perfectly delicious. Found Miss H. at home, who obligingly accompanied me through the charming grounds of the adjoining demesne, and re-conducted me to the Downs through the wood overlooking the Avon, taking me on the way to a lovely meadow, from which the prospect of the Severn and the Welsh mountains and hills of Monmouth in the distance, together with sloping fields, woods, villas, flocks and herds, all enchantingly blended in the foreground, formed a picture of such surpassing and unimaginable beauty, that I could hardly believe I stood on earth! Indeed, had my orthodoxy been more rigid than it was, the history of the *fall of man* must have appeared a fiction, since I was ready

to swear that if ever a Paradise had being, it was still accessible to the sons of Adam, and that I was then and there enjoying it."

And never did these beauties lose their charm for him. During the twenty years he passed in their neighbourhood, his favourite walk was over the downs and fields he here describes; and towards the end of his life, when he had succeeded, to his infinite delight, in building a house of his own within an easy distance of this "paradise," it was often the privilege of the writer to accompany him to a convenient spot to view the enchanting landscape and listen to the poetical and pious ejaculations which this scenery and its associations never failed to call from his lips. Sweet indeed is the memory of those happy hours passed in the society of this noble, generous-hearted man.

Sunday, October 15, Mr. A. writes: "Preached and went through the whole morning service to a very large congregation at Lewin's Mead.

"Tuesday, 17th. Mr. Estlin called and sat with me for half an hour. One of the most agreeable, gentlemanlike persons I have ever seen.

"Sunday, 22nd. Preached and went through the whole service. Morning service, the place cram-full. In the evening preached a second time."

Of the effect of his preaching on the congregation, he gives the following amusing specimen:

"Monday 23rd. On leaving the Bush tavern, after making inquiries about the London coaches, I proceeded to the singularly ancient street called 'Mary-le-Port,' after inspecting which I was about to pass on, when lo! a person without his coat on, in a hurried but pressing manner requested me to follow him to his house hard by. I did so; but it was more pursuit than following, so rapid was his pace. In a very few moments he turned into a shoemaker's shop—never stopped a moment—shot up a narrow flight of stairs, I at his heels—when, after imploring me to be seated, he darted to a cupboard, took the remains of what *was* a bottle of wine, called to his wife to bring a glass and some biscuits, and fell to talking with me about Lewin's Mead, glorifying me for my sermons and services, telling me he was Mr. W—,

an humble shoemaker, and one of some twenty others who were that very day engaged in subscribing to join in giving me a tea-party, in the hope that I would please to meet and converse with them. As I was engaged for the whole week, I begged him to postpone the invitation. He was very reluctant to do so, but at last consented. So after talking about the congregation and its schools and tract societies, and thanking Providence for the excellent and dutiful children he had, to whom and their mother he introduced me before I departed, at length I was able to effect my egress into the street.\*

“In the evening I was engaged in the thoughts of the morning’s doings, and of the (to me) odd sort of life which was beginning to open on me, when Mr. William Palmer was announced. His object was to request my return from London here, to be present at their sacramental service on Sunday, Nov. 5. I requested leave to take a day or two to think of it, foreseeing the probable event of my preaching in case of consenting. On the whole, I now saw clearly the growing crisis in which I was so soon to be involved, and I felt strongly the rather *frightful* amount of the *success* by which my mission to Bristol had been, and was still likely to be attended!

“May God Almighty in his great mercy protect, guide, sanctify and prepare me for whatever result and whatever duties, public or private, He may see fit to appoint for me! Amen.”

Mr. Armstrong returned to Bristol from London, and remained there until the 10th of November, when he took his departure for Liverpool, where he was the guest of the Rev. James Martineau. While there, he paid a visit to his friend Mr. Blanco White, of which he thus speaks in his journal:

“Saturday, Nov. 11. Accompanied by Mr. James Martineau, I called on Mr. Blanco White, with whom we conversed with much pleasure for three quarters of an hour. At first, Mr. White seemed and declared himself extremely ill and incapable of the effort of conversation; but he insensibly rallied, and soon evinced

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\* These children have since then emigrated to Australia, where they are doing well, and now support their parents in comfortable retirement. They are active members of the Unitarian church at Melbourne.

an uncommon earnestness and power. His curious and forcible remarks on the character and position of Archbishop Whately. The utopian work of the latter. Animated description of his impressions on reading a recent work of his German friend Neander on the Inspiration of Scripture.

"Sunday, 12th. Preached in Mr. Martineau's church. In the evening heard Mr. Thom preach at Renshaw-Street chapel,—a delightful place of worship, well supported by the distinguished talent of the minister.

"Tuesday, 14th. Took a berth in the steamer for Dublin. On the whole, I passed my short sojourn in Liverpool most agreeably in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Martineau. The latter well worthy to be the wife of one of the purest and most cultivated individuals to be met with;—a distinguished scholar, an acute philosopher in every department of human science, and if not the soundest of divines, that far better thing,—one of the most upright, high-minded and amiable of human beings.

"Wednesday, 15th. On my arrival at Dublin found the distinguished gratification awaiting me of a copy of his tract on Texas from Dr. Channing.

"Thursday, 23rd. This and the following days of the week occupied in communicating with Mr. Grote on the unparalleled outrage of Lord John Russell in the House of Commons on the subject of the Ballot, &c. Sent Mr. G. my letter to Lord M——e.

"Wednesday, 29th. Found on my arrival home the long-expected and all too flattering and decisive letter from Bristol! O how my stunned heart fled to God for relief and solace!"

The letter here alluded to was one from Mr. H. A. Palmer, the Treasurer of Lewin's-Mead chapel, enclosing the following resolution, passed unanimously at a general congregational meeting:

"That the Rev. George Armstrong be invited to undertake the office of co-pastor of this religious society, in conjunction with our revered minister, the Rev. Dr. Carpenter."

To this invitation Mr. Armstrong returned a favourable reply, couched in his usual modest, self-depreciatory manner.

"After much thought and many prayers to Almighty God for guidance to a wise and worthy conclusion," he writes to Mr.

Palmer, "it is my duty to inform you that I accept the important trust which the Lewin's-Mead society have been pleased to offer me." "I have only to add," he continues, after some complimentary allusions to his future amiable and worthy colleague, "that my whole time and strength shall be at the service of your people; but aware as I believe you sufficiently are of my lengthened retirement from professional duty, and especially that of the pulpit, I am disposed to hope that if I should seem to devote myself with less of assiduity and alacrity to extra pulpit duties than the congregation, or I myself under different circumstances, would desire,—this fact will be attributed to its true cause—the absolute necessity of a somewhat undue application of my time to preparation for the constantly recurring exertions of the Sunday, for which I am at present, and must be for a no inconsiderable period of time, so slenderly provided with resources."

He proceeded to communicate his acceptance of this new sphere of duty to his friends and relatives, and to many of them he shewed the flattering letter from Bristol. Although the latter, who were still attached by long custom and affection to the Established Church, naturally felt pleased at the high estimation of his talents and his worth by the Lewin's-Mead congregation, they could not entirely suppress their regrets that they were Dissenters. "The Bristol letter is very complimentary," writes one of his nieces. "Papa was greatly pleased with it. I only wish it was from a committee of Mr. Biddulph's chapel, instead of Dr. Carpenter's."

The time was now fast approaching when he was to bid adieu to old scenes and old associations, to take up his abode among strangers and almost to begin the world anew. His journal describes him as "constantly in the agony of packing;" and on Sunday, the 28th of January, 1838, he writes: "A melancholy sabbath to me!—a leave-taking of things animate and inanimate which I would fain have never parted from." Two days more, and he is away to his new home.

"Tuesday, January 30. At five o'clock parted with kind and hospitable Bess and her party, and at half-past five com-

mitted myself to the vessel which was to bear me from my dear native land, on I know not what mission of weal or woe. Just as we loosed out the hawser which had held us to the shore, I put up some prayers which I trust were accepted, and shed some tears which I felt to be uncontrollable, at the deep and moving thoughts, as well of the chequered past as of the unknown and anxious future, which were struggling for the mastery in my bosom in that trying moment.

"Beautiful as the day had been, the evening became cold and cloudy soon after we set sail, with a wind a-head of us. Yet our passage was as smooth as across a lake. I remained on deck, in conversation with the captain and some ladies, as long as I could endure the cold, and until I had quite lost sight of, alas! the long known and familiar lights of Howth and Dublin Bay.

"Thursday, Feb. 1. Arrived at half-past eight at my apartments at 13, Meridian Place, Clifton. Full of depressing thoughts, and nothing on earth to raise and comfort me, save the never-failing resource of prayer to God.

"Greatly do I err (and would that it were an error!) if the situation I have been urged to accept do not prove much beyond my power to fill with the comfort and honour which so many of my friends and prudent advisers have so long and so strenuously been predicting as the result of my painful and eventful experiment.

"Sunday, Feb. 4. Commenced this day, in devout self-surrender to my Heavenly Father, my accepted and formal ministration as co-pastor with the Rev. Dr. Lant Carpenter in the charge of Lewin's-Mead congregation of Bristol. A very numerous congregation, and abundantly kind expressions of welcome, &c. after the service."

Success continued, in spite of his misgivings, to attend his efforts in the pulpit, and he was induced at the request of his congregation to publish the three remarkable discourses with which he commenced his labours among them.\* And well did

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\* Abuse of Power in the State, the Cause and Support of Corrupt Doctrine in the Church. Three Discourses; together with an Address explanatory of the Author's Secession from the United Church of England and Ireland. London: Simpkin and Marshall. 1838.



these and all his other sermons deserve this success; for they were composed with infinite care, and were the genuine outpourings of a truly religious heart, and a well-pondered, deeply-felt faith in God and Christ.

But what a change of social position, social relations and public responsibilities, for the incumbent of Bangor and the squire of Bingfield! Some interesting passages of his journal, where he has laid bare his heart, will enable us to follow him in all the secret movements of his thoughts and feelings in the situation, so novel and so trying to his gentle nature, of a Dissenting minister and professional advocate of an unpopular and misrepresented faith.

One circumstance among many others which made him feel how completely he had severed himself from the past, and "how friends were changed," was the conduct of a lady and her nephew who had been among the most intimate acquaintances of his family when residing in Ireland.

The appointment to a curacy at Clifton had brought the nephew from Ireland, who with his aunt was residing at the former place at the time of Mr. Armstrong's arrival there to enter upon his duties at Lewin's-Mead chapel. He had been welcomed kindly by them when he came to Bristol on his former passing visits; but now that he was finally settled there, the lady informed him, through a mutual friend, that their intimacy must be considered at an end. The demon "orthodoxy" is ever greedy of sacrifices, and on its polluted altar the curate and his aunt made an offering of their friend. But of the spirit which influenced the orthodox and that which guided the soul of the heretic, and which was nearest the spirit of the gospel, I leave the readers of the following letters to judge.

" Clifton, Feb. 3, 1838.

"My dear Madam,—Although the letter which you will receive with this was written before my departure from Ireland, I have kept it by me until my arrival here, that I might have time to reflect whether there were anything in it of which I could conscientiously disapprove, or which could reasonably be thought unpleasant to you.

"I could not indeed bear the thought of wounding a mind so gentle and once so friendly as yours; and from my heart I do believe, as I can truly say I did intend, that nothing of the kind either is or should be conveyed in the letter I now forward.

"May I say to you further and finally, that in my unsuspecting nature, and with feelings perhaps more than usually susceptible, I was ill prepared for a repulse from the only individual in this place, so strange to me, whose recollection of times and *persons* so cherished in my mourning heart could (as I had hoped) have helped to soothe and mitigate emotions which only those who have mourned can understand, and only those who *feel* could adequately relieve.

"I am, dear Madam, under every circumstance, very respectfully yours,

GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

"Dublin, Jan. 1838.

"Dear Madam,—Soon after my return from England, I had an opportunity of hearing of the embarrassment you felt at the prospect of my connection with Bristol; and now, on my visiting Mrs. Owen Armstrong, learn by a more recent communication from you how necessary it is I should no longer postpone the duty of setting your mind at ease on my account. I wish you to be assured, dear Madam, that on my return to Bristol, whither I am immediately repairing, it will be as little my wish as it can be yours, or that of your nephew, to enter upon an intercourse which, in the state of mind I should find in your circle, must prove to the full as distasteful to me as it could be annoying to you. Yet, setting aside any circumstances that might affect myself in the case, I cannot but feel deeply concerned that so injurious and (pardon me for terming it) mistaken a conception of duty should have found expression from your pen. I happen to have now before me two communications, at very distant intervals of time, from you and your family to me and mine. The one dated at S—, in 1817, jointly from Mr. W—, yourself and your nephew (then a child); the other dated but recently from Clifton, to my cousin Mrs. Armstrong.

"On perusing this correspondence, I have been tempted to

exclaim to myself—‘Look on this picture,—and on this!’ And in dwelling on the melancholy exhibition presented in the latter, have been further tempted to exclaim, in words which your nephew will understand—‘*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!*’ The former all kindness,—the latter, alas! how deeply infected with the spirit which has in all times prompted the persecutor to imagine that, in dealing whether death, or defamation, or unkindness (in *principle* it matters not which), he was rendering a service to God!

“But neither in the quoted passage, nor in the example which you would unhappily seem to sanction, is it ‘Religion,’ in its better and genuine sense, which has anything to do in the matter.

“Oh no! Assuredly it is *not* religion—the religion at least of Christ—as represented in Matt. xxv. 35, &c., which prompts you to drive a stranger from your door; but *that* which perhaps some few of your clerical friends may have read of in Chillingworth (occasionally a very revered authority among Churchmen when they wish to be considered as genuine Protestants)—‘*the deifying of our own interpretations*’ of Scripture,—which he justly calls ‘the common incendiary of Christendom,’—and the setting up that as an idol in our breast which is taken to be an image of the true God, while it is all the while but an impress of our own poor fallible judgment, and in fact but another form of SELF. For what indeed else, my dear Madam, but *your own interpretations* (abstracting them, as I am willing to do, from all considerations of mere worldly policy)—what, I ask, but your own interpretations can they be which appear to you to warrant the line of conduct you propose to pursue on the present occasion? For my own part, I protest I can conceive of no other than three possible ways in which any religious opinion can be got at.

“Either one’s own private judgment, or the Church’s authority, or divine inspiration. Now if a person have the last, it behoves him to shew forth visibly the miraculous power with which he is invested, as the apostles did of old; for assuredly it is not enough to *tell* another that he possesses that power, and is supernaturally guarded from falling into error.

“But if he rely on the Church’s authority, then wherefore plead the evidence of Scripture, which in itself must be all-sufficient; and is that which the same mighty Chillingworth has ever vindicated in the memorable words, ‘The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants’? Wherefore, in short, renounce the dominion of Rome, which rests on authority, and what she calls uniformity of tradition; but to which authority and tradition it could easily be shewn, whether of the Churches of Rome or England, that they have neither of them the slightest shadow of pretension, inasmuch as their respective opinions, and even some in which they coalesce, have been in all ages of the Church exposed to open rejection and dispute. But, lastly, if only one’s own private judgment is to be relied on, may it not just be *possible* that that judgment is *mistaken*—and that interpretations of Holy Scripture which you, for example, hold to be most warranted, have less of truth in them than your own education and circumstances have hitherto permitted you to suspect, seeing that the most worthy, intelligent and competent, nay illustrious, individuals, who have sought God and truth with all their soul and all their strength, and have devoutly surrendered their whole lives to the service of their Saviour,—the Miltons, the Newtons, and the Lockes,—have altogether failed to perceive those doctrines in Scripture, of which you declare (wrongfully, as I in common with them believe) the evidence to be so palpable and convincing?

“But enough. However large and urgent the theme with which you have supplied me, I forbear; and would only add that the head and front of mine offending is that, in all humility but in all sincerity, I would maintain that there is ‘but one God, the *Father*; and one Lord, Jesus Christ;’ that ‘there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, *one God and Father* of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all;’ and that ‘This is life eternal, to know’ (which is to believe and obey) ‘the *Father* as the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent.’

“Finally, ‘If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s.’

"Wishing you, dear Madam, all happiness and comfort in your own belief, and a spirit of forbearance and humility towards that of others, perhaps as competent, and certainly as sincere, as yourself, who may happen to differ from you in what they esteem to be the word and will of God,—I remain, with every feeling of respect, your very obedient servant,

GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

"Sunday, March 25. Preached in Lewin's Mead in the morning on Faith and Reason. Came home to luncheon, and looked over sermon for evening service at Bath, whither, at half-past two, George, Jane and I set out in a fly. Arrived at half-past four. Walked about the town and afterwards to Unitarian chapel, Trim Street, where, lo and behold! we found *my name* announced for the evening service in *printed placards* on the doors! Well, well, well, to be sure—the Rev. George, of Binglefield and Donnybrook and Kilsharvan and Clontarf—will my soul be ever reconciled to the change? As yet, no sign of it.

"March 27. This morning waited upon by the Secretary of the Lewin's-Mead Easter anniversary, to request me to *undertake the arrangement of the resolutions*. How on earth shall I do this! The meeting is to take place on Good Friday, on which morning I have to preach, and then again to get up a speech or set of speeches for the evening. Truly, all this *is* passing strange to me.

"Good Friday, April 13. Preached with much effect in the morning at Lewin's Mead. After church, finished writing my speech, and proceeded at five o'clock to tea-meeting at school-room, Jane only accompanying me. Our meeting at tea consisted of about 260 people, who, afterwards adjourning to the chapel, were joined by perhaps 80 or 100 people more. Dr. Carpenter in the chair for the business of the evening, far too much of which, for the comfort of my feelings, was occupied not *by*, but *with*, myself; my speech was received with manifest satisfaction by the meeting and much compliment from individuals. But there were many interesting speeches spoken by others, two of them by Messrs. Hall and Murch, hailing my arrival among them, and offering me, 'the right hand of fellowship,' &c.; to

all of which I had, in despite of my dread of extemporaneous effusion, to get up and make such acknowledgment in reply as I could. But one speech there was 'of higher mood' and far more important subject—the Unitarian ministry to the poor in the town and district of Trowbridge. Beautiful were the details and powerfully affecting, from the force and simplicity of its manner, the speech with which the meeting was gratified by the Rev. Mr. Martin, a man of the right sort, full of nerve, full of heart and faith, of benevolence and simplicity. Would that Unitarianism could boast of many such! It gave the finishing charm to a very delightful meeting, not the less delightful from the excellent speech of my truly cultivated, gentleman-like and Christian friend, Mr. Estlin, on the subject of one of my resolutions supplied to the Committee, *Unitarianism as the religion of females*. He did it justice.

"April 23. Went out with Jane on the interesting duty of visiting some sick poor; and truly pleasing and instructive as well as interesting this duty was.

"April 30. To Bath. Walked with Mr. Howse to Prior Park, passing by Widcombe House, once the residence of my uncle Forbes, and recognizing in all its pristine beauty of form, if not as yet of foliage, the venerable chesnut-tree which I used to admire in my earlier rambles round this lovely neighbourhood when visiting Mr. and Mrs. F. in former years in Bath. What strange and inexplicable, and, alas! what harrowing changes too, since my latest visit there before, in Feb. 1819! How I wished to be alone, that I might think and think and think of dear and distant times, without the sound of any voice or foot-step but my own!

"May 15. Went to meeting at Guildhall, Bristol, convened to petition for immediate abolition of apprenticeship in the West Indies. A most able and eloquent statement of the whole case from a Rev. Mr. Bunting, of Liverpool. Observed with regret and surprise that no interest was taken in this meeting by the people of Lewin's Mead.

"May 19. Sat this day and night twelve hours and a half writing out my sermon, of very formidable length—forty-six

pages in all—thirty-eight of which I this day wrote. To bed at three o'clock in the morning.

"May 20. Preached my long sermon for Stokes Croft school. Morning being bad, attendance was thin; but discouraging as this circumstance was, I went through it with wonderful force and animation, although I had only two hours of disturbed sleep the night, or rather morning, before.

"May 25. All day at sermon. Some sweet sauntering after breakfast and before dinner in the fields. It is *indeed* beyond expression sweet—the only blessed portion of my being—to sit by an old tree on a sunny though sheltered and quite secluded bank, with a little pocket prayer-book in my hand, communing with God, while I think in resignation of the past, in humble hope of the future, and only in doubt as to the reality of the actual present. Verily, always has my life been a strange one; but now ten thousand-fold more strange than ever.

"May 27. To Lewin's Mead with Jane. A very excellent discourse from Dr. Carpenter on Domestic Worship; affecting allusion to the death of Mr. Biddulph, a celebrated but amiable preacher of 'evangelical' doctrine, who had for very many years been the rector of the parish in which Lewin's Mead is situated. The simple but beautiful tribute of my excellent and Rev. colleague I dare say was well deserved; but much do I fear that the equal deservings of my friend will never meet with equally charitable notice in any Church pulpit in Bristol, when the day shall come for numbering him with the excellent of the earth who have gone for their surer reward to the kingdom of their Father in heaven.

"May 30. Visited as usual my oratory at the foot of a tree with my little manual of prayer. What indeed were man without God in the world! And is it not something—nay, is it not everything—to have found this out?"

There was a heavy cloud on his life at this time which sadly increased the anxieties incident to the commencement of his new career, and the entire change of his habits, home and friends,—a deep, deep sorrow, which he carried with him to the grave. I forbear to expose the painful details of this domestic grief,

now lying before me in the heart-rending language of my friend as he pours forth his agonized soul to God to save him from one of the bitterest trials that can befall a man. But I write for others not so privileged as I am, and I cannot consent to allow a circumstance so deeply affecting his mind, and consequently his outward conduct, to pass unnoticed, lest any apparent dereliction of duty, however trifling, in the performance of the great responsibility he had undertaken, should want an explanation in the opinion of those who, looking to him for instruction, consolation and example, criticized him severely, as the entries in his journals and his correspondence shew. A passing glance at one of these sad scenes, and I will draw the curtain, leaving to time and faith the healing of his torn bosom. "Again," he writes on July 28, 1838, "completely overwhelmed by grief and confusion at the conduct of . . . . It is impossible I can preach to-morrow."

"July 29. As soon as the people were all at church and chapel, I sallied forth by the downs, Sneyd Park and Kingsweston, to Shirehampton, tarrying often in my progress to sit or lie in the fields overlooking the most enchanting prospects, and in one field, having the sweet consolation of abundant tears, often pouring out my heart in prayer to God. . . . Oh! what were man, what were *I* at least, without this blessed, this ever-healing resource!

"Walking through the noble park, by a public footway, of Mr. Miles, late Lord de Clifford's, I reached Shirehampton about half-past three o'clock, and, passing on, inquired the way to Penfold Point, which Point I reached by a circuitous route, taking the village of S. Hampton in my way, instead of going on from Kingsweston Park; but I was not sorry that my mistake led me through this pretty village. The prospect from Penfold was indeed glorious; after pausing there sufficiently long for *one* view of it, I returned into the park, and, crossing a high road by a sort of bridge from the demesne, found what *appeared* to be an inn in the further grounds. Here I had proposed to lodge for the night, but lo! they had shut up the house, and I was recommended to try a small place on the road-side towards Henbury, the latter celebrated village being about two miles off.



Accordingly I went in quest of the inn, along a very beautiful road dividing the demesne, and presently arrived at the very gate into Lord de Clifford's grounds, where I had, *exactly twenty-seven years before* (summer of 1811), driven in, or rather on, my uncle Forbes's carriage, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Forbes and my father, who sat on the box with me. Yet here was I by myself, at that distance of time, again in the same spot, where, in that former period if any one had predicted to me that I was now to be under circumstances so intensely different, verily, verily, I should have *stared* not a little at the wight or conjuror who had undertaken so to abuse my credulity,—so little, alas! do we know what sport we are to be for time and chance—nay, rather for awful Providence—to deal withal. Saw the *quasi* inn, but, though neat for a peasant pedestrian, not exactly the place I should like to solicit a bed at; walked, therefore, on to lovely Henbury, explored the churchyard, heard the curiously ding-dong bell, and, inquiring for the inn, found a large, comfortable-looking house, called the 'Salutation;' nevertheless, my salutation was not agreeable, for I was told they had *no beds*; and now what was I to do? Six, or rather seven o'clock, as it was, I was resolved what to do. I took courage, and away with me through the lovely woods of Squire Harford of Blaize Castle, almost more enjoyable than anything I had yet seen; and after an exquisite ramble of two miles, again reached Shirehampton, and addressed myself hopefully, confidently, to the George inn; but, alas! it was no 'George' inn for me, for neither here were there any beds, at least unbespoken; and once more I was advised to try Lamplighter's Hall, a rather questionable sort of *hospice*, at the water edge, opposite the far-famed though not very interesting fishing and pilot town of Pill. Here at length I met with a welcome, if not a warm, reception, and made my *dinner* and *tea* of one very hearty meal of congo and toast, the only food I had tasted since my breakfast at Meridian Place, upwards of ten hours before, having walked in the course of the day at least fifteen miles.

"August 18. Enjoyed an hour after breakfast in the fields, where I sat, beside some happy sheep, under an old and much-

decayed ash-tree, which yielded a delightfully cool shelter from the rather powerful sun. Here I selected my hymns for Sunday, and then returned to sit in the house the whole of this enchanting day, preparing my sermon, which I intended, up to dinner-time, to divide into two. At half-past six, Saturday as it was, I repaired to Mr. Osler's, with good prospects of a dinner; and about seven, arrived Messrs. Hobhouse and Manning, both barristers attending the assizes here; the former, M.P. for Rochester and brother of Sir John; the latter, a very distinguished person in his profession and often spoken of as an expectant Judge; these, with Mr. Estlin and a Mr. Vining, made our party. I left them at ten, and finding that Bristol was pretty full of strangers, some of them likely to be at Lewin's Mead, I resolved to enlarge my sermon, and actually wrote out eight sheets more before I went to bed at half-past two.

"Sunday, Aug. 19. Preached from Matthew iii. 2, for forty minutes, to a very crowded congregation; the Records of Plymouth and Oxford, Mr. Hobhouse, Major Irvin, &c., being present; preached with much power. In the evening to Lewin's Mead with the Misses Acland; heard Mr. Gordon, of Dudley, preach an excellent discourse on 'Call no man common or unclean.' This gentleman had been a Wesleyan Methodist; he made curious mention of my being long known to him by name, &c., through a Mr. Palmer, of Dudley, a sort of unknown convert of mine.

"Aug. 24. Met Rev. Henry W——, \* face to face, twice this day. Poor creature! he thought he was doing God service in passing by on the other side, as if he knew me not! Of such is orthodoxy!"

And so amid the anxious, and to Mr. Armstrong the absorbing, duties of the pulpit and its attendant obligations, he passed the first eight months of this, as it were, second part of his life. In October he visited his old friends in Ireland, and his thoughts and reflections amid associations so suggestive of the past, the present and the future, throw a pleasant light on his inner life and character.

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\* The gentleman referred to in the letters at pp. 109, 110.

“October, 23, 1838. Outside the coach to Kilsharvan. I sat vis-à-vis to good-natured W. W——, brother to the orthodox hero of Clifton; but, much to the advantage of his good heart, poor fellow! but little infected with the insolent delusions of his Rev. relative in England. In fact, we chatted very pleasantly until we parted at Gormanstown turnpike-gate.

“Oct. 24. A walk about noon in the garden. The stillness most affecting to me. With melancholy pleasure sauntered through my old walks in the wood and furbawn. Much Bristol chat in the evening by the library fire.

“Oct. 29. About eleven o'clock, proceeded to walk to Tully, and met Dr. R—— on my way. Interesting, alas! too interesting, conversation about past times and events. Mentioned that the Bishop would be glad to see me. Parted, as we had met, with kindness and affection. Pursued my walk. At Farnham Gate turned into the park for cleanness' sake, or rather indeed for 'auld lang syne.' . . . .

“How many changes to the occupants of that place, as well as to myself, since I had, with happy heart and my gallant steed, last entered it to gallop amidst the frightened deer between the two gates on my way to my sweet home at Bingfield! While I was walking this day through the same scene, the sun shone and the air was pleasant, as if to intimate that there was Goodness still above and around me; and that it would be my own fault if there were not within me, too, a portion of that sunshine and sweetness in which nature and the fair scene before me were at that moment arrayed.

“Pursuing my way, at length reached the old back road to Kilmore; and in due time came in view, for the first time since it was finished, of the beautiful new palace of my old friend the Bishop, for whom, in common with every person and object of my old neighbourhood, I felt, and could not help feeling, an overpowering interest. Soon arriving at Tully Gate, revealed myself to the much-delighted view of Mary, wife of my former very excellent ploughman and faithful servant, John M'Gayshan. The gladness and affection of the poor woman on recognizing me,

quite overcame me. Found the Major's family all well—very glad to see me—and all, except the youngest boy, quite grown up.

“Accompanied by the Major, I walked up to Danesport to see the odd Dean. Alack and alas! the good, fat, jolly, hospitable Dean of former days! when Dick M——, Henry L——, Archdeacon A——, the Bishop and his lady, perhaps Edward G—— or Alex. M—— of the *party*, the sweet family party from Bingfield, would all meet together and laugh and chat and dine and *sup* too, till the long hour of twelve gave warning that it was more than time to go home.

“Visit ended at the Dean's, thence to Kilmore to call on the Bishop. Met Mrs. Beresford at the hall-door, who, after introducing me to Mark's very interesting children, went up to tell the Bishop I was there; but he sent word he was much too unwell to see me in his room, but hoped he would see me again; a hope, however, not likely now ever to be realized.

“Time too limited to think of going to Bingfield, or poor deserted Crossdoney, even if my feelings could have reconciled me to the attempt. After a kind and hospitable entertainment by the Major, who brought out a bottle of my own old Madeira, took my departure at nine o'clock in his carriage to meet the mail in Cavan, by which, after a rapid and prosperous journey on a very fine night, I arrived in Dublin at six o'clock on the following morning.

“Nov. 2. To Sandy Cove, Kingston, to see my dear, kind Mrs. W——. Went so far in company with O—— L——. Our curious and animated conversation about treatment of servants by masters in reference to attendance at family prayers; also on Irish politics generally. Curiously enough, it was in fact my friend who had preposterously declined to hire as coachman John M'K., for whom I felt so much interest, a most exemplary and respectable servant, because the wife of the latter—whom also he would have hired as housekeeper—had an insuperable objection to attending the prayers of a Protestant family. Bigotry and gross darkness on both sides! But do country gentlemen in Ireland, mere *political* Protestants as most of them

are, hope to mitigate the bigotry of the more *ignorant*, and therefore more *excusable*, Catholics by such nonsensical and wicked pretensions as this?

"Nov. 4. Preached at Strand Street. Complimentary and curious comments from sundry and various folks. Met Miss W—— at Gardiner's Row, who had come to beg I would let her take my sermon to Mrs. W—— to read it, my cousin and nephew W. L—— having also just the moment before asked permission to copy it. Well, the lady first, of course: accordingly the sermon was taken to Kingstown, and was actually copied that night by good Mrs. W——, who sent it back to me next morning by ten o'clock, ready to be forwarded, agreeably to promise, to friend W. L——. Whereupon to W. L—— it was sent, who giving it to a scrivener to copy, came the following morning to tell me how *proud* I ought to be, for it had cost him no less than ten shillings to have it transcribed! And thus it is that capricious Fortune showers honours in the path even of the least expectant and the least worthy."

And thus once more among old friends and old scenes, his heart warmed by tender recollections of so many days passed and so many pleasures enjoyed among them,—his mind too somewhat harassed by misgivings as to his qualifications for his new post at Bristol,—perhaps a little dismayed at the isolated situation of a Unitarian minister, of the public advocate "of a sect every where spoken against,"—and at the little honour in which it was held by the world; and the limited circle of social intercourse and social influence to which he would be henceforth confined,—his thoughts seem to have turned again to the "Secretaryship of the National Education Board."

"Monday, Nov. 5," he writes—"Walking about a good deal with my excellent friend H——; \* taking counsel of him as to the Secretaryship of Education Board. His strong advice to me to remain *contented*; with the observation, that in my situation, and as he was pleased to say, with *my powers* (?) he would not relinquish it for an Archbishop's throne! Yet he said I

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\* A clergyman of the Established Church.

might at least inquire of our veritable Archbishop (Dick of Dublin, as he is called) how far the exercise of religious liberty, or at least of the clerical function, would be compromised or affected in the contingency of such an appointment. And this I determined to do.

“Nov. 6. Supped with Dr. Armstrong. His strong remark to me on my preaching. Lord have mercy upon me, and enable me to keep my heart!

“Nov. 7. Called on the Archbishop, this being his clerical day. Thought it so queer to find myself among so many wights of a ‘doxy’ so opposite to my own, and yet so entirely unsuspected by the reverend crowd of hangers-on and expectants, among whom I was sitting, or standing, or chatting, as chance or convenience led, with the most perfect unconcern; except, indeed, on thinking of the dense and dismal mass of prejudice and bigotry, and theological folly or fierceness, with which I was then surrounded! How long, O Lord! how long? In my turn conversed with his Grace, to whom I very frankly communicated my views as to the situation of Secretary to the National Education Board, and the conditions under which (supposing success attainable) I could alone permit myself to accept it. Just as frankly, and with great good-humour and courtesy, did his Grace communicate in reply, that my being a clergyman, no matter of what denomination, was in itself a bar to my views which to the Board would be insuperable—it being imperative, in discharge of their trust, to abstain from every appearance of favouring any one religious body more than another, or giving any reasonable grounds of jealousy by one appointment, without *balancing* it with another, which, even were it practicable, or expedient, would be endless. I quite anticipated, in truth, this view of the case; but conceiving it a duty, as well to my friends as to myself, to put the matter beyond doubt, I did not regret having taken this step, and with no feeling of dissatisfaction at the result, and with all due expression of thanks for his Grace’s obliging reception, wished he might live a thousand years, and bid him a very good morning. The fact is, I felt relieved—the matter had long weighed on my mind; and my

children and relations would doubtless have rejoiced in my appointment to so distinguished a situation. But I was already in a situation, which, if not so advantageous or largely remunerating, was yet one of honour and usefulness; and I humbly blessed God that I was so far favoured as to be called to his service in a way more directly congenial to my tastes and compatible with my powers, and not less conducive to the benefit of his creatures."

His visit to Ireland was now at an end, and, casting "a longing, lingering look behind," he set sail for Liverpool on the 8th of November, 1838, and after a short sojourn at Birmingham, where he preached, he reached Bristol on Monday, the 12th. He thus touchingly alludes to his forsaken home—forsaken truly, but in search of nobler fields of duty :

"Nov. 12. My dear Janey at kind Mrs. Acland's, with whom and the friendly family at Stapleton Grove she had been staying during most of my absence in Ireland. I cannot yet bring myself to say from '*home*.' For still and ever, I believe, that fond and happy name will be associated in my mind with the land of my fathers—the scene of my birth, my boyhood, and of a manhood for the most part happy, though dashed with trials, and never to be forgotten for the society and the love which, alas! can never now be mine again. O yes! my home is where my heart is."

But his heart was not destined to be left so desolate. Trials, bitter trials, which we have already glanced at, were in store for him; but joys also awaited him; and Bristol became the scene not only of honoured usefulness, but of domestic happiness and peace. There he formed new ties as a husband and a father, and his sick pillow,—for he suffered much from asthma,—was soothed, and his life again cheered, by the affection of amiable children and the indefatigable devotion of an admirable wife. He re-entered vigorously on his duties as one of the ministers of Lewin's-Mead chapel, and soon became known, not only as an able Christian advocate, but also as one of the most public-spirited, patriotic and liberal of the citizens of Bristol. In the

exercise of these duties, and in some of the communings of his own soul, it will now be my privilege briefly to speak of him, until, overcome by illness, he resigns his pulpit (without, however, resigning his pen or relinquishing his efforts for the world's progress and the world's peace), and at length, reclining on his wife's shoulder, and full of faith and hope, drops asleep, only to awake in heaven.



## PART II.

FROM 1838 TO 1857.



## PART II.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### LIFE IN BRISTOL.

MR. ARMSTRONG, now finally settled at Bristol, with no thought of ever leaving it, continued the duties of his new position with the zeal and ardour natural to him in all the pursuits which interested his heart and satisfied his mind. His life does not henceforth furnish many striking changes or adventures; its romance, as it were, was over; the haven of intellectual and spiritual rest was found; a sphere of congenial action had opened, and, with the exception of the interruptions to his domestic peace which have been mentioned, and the minor annoyances arising from the prejudices of society against his religious faith, his life flowed on in its quiet and consistent course.

The views of Christianity and Christian duty which he had adopted after conscientious study and from deep conviction,—the spirit and letter of which we have already traced,\*—he never saw reason to change; and the business of his life henceforth is their practical application to the growth of his own religious life, and their realization in the minds and lives of others.

He was requested by the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to preach the annual sermon at their spring

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\* See Appendix and extracts from correspondence for further illustrations of the progress of his mind.

meeting in 1839. His sermon\* excited a great deal of complimentary allusion in the speeches at the *déjeuner* following the service, and a vote of thanks was, as usual, presented to him, with the observations which naturally suggested themselves on the occasion. In his reply, he thus alludes to himself and his religious history :

“It may possibly be interesting to some who hear me, to learn from myself a portion of my mental history, which may serve to account for the circumstance of my now standing before you in the character of a convert from Church-of-England Orthodoxy, to the pure and genuine form of Christian belief which I think I have found in Unitarianism.

“I have twice proved in my own person an intellectual truth laid down by the great Lord Bacon, viz., that he who begins with believing much, will generally end in believing little ; while he who begins with believing little, will, in all probability, advance to the belief of a wider number of conclusions. I began my religious inquiries as a sceptic ; but in process of time—never having been a willing, never, I hope, a corrupt one—I found that condition of mind, at least the grounds upon which it rested, quite untenable ; and upon better reflection and inquiry, I arrived at the conviction that Christianity was a true religion,—that it was, in fact, supernaturally revealed, which was with me the original difficulty. In arriving at this conclusion, my situation and connections in life led me inadvertently to consider that I had nothing to do but to embrace with a like conviction the Church in which my infancy had been educated, as the pillar and ground of truth, and as, in short, Christianity itself. Not many years were requisite to convince me that I had been in too great a hurry ; and, in conformity with the intellectual process indicated by the aphorism of Lord Bacon, it was once again my lot to shake off some untenable opinions, and to renew my search in pursuit of that truth of which, wherever it lay, I was ever desirous of being a humble but faithful disciple. I had, indeed, gone on too rapidly, and in pursuing

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\* The Simplicity of Godliness. Smallfield, London. 1839.

what I had thought to be the light of truth, I found it to be only an ignis fatuus which brought me into a morass, where I was in truth very nearly lost, and from which it cost me not a little trouble to extricate myself; but get out of the scrape I finally did, and at length rejoiced in finding myself on the terra firma, breathing the pure air and treading in the firm footing of the unadulterated Gospel of Christ, in that form which I, at last, found no difficulty in discerning, and no slight happiness in reaching, viz., the tenets of Christian Unitarianism as known and received by the body with which I have the honour to be surrounded, and by which I have been so kindly and so graciously received.

“ I admit that I saw, as I still see, a great deal of piety among the professors of the established creed, but yet I never could feel satisfied with it, because I found it associated with principles which, if followed out, would impeach to so alarming an extent the principles, not alone of common sense and human reason, but the moral attributes of the Divinity Himself, as to be incapable of sustaining any piety at all, so soon as the general mind, in the progress of a national, and now I believe no longer avoidable, enlightenment, should arrive at a condition in which it should be able to discern between the simplest elements of right and wrong, of true and false. It was a piety excellent it may be so long as it lasted, but still not capable of lasting. It was a beacon constructed not on the solid rock of reason, throwing upward and around it a cheering, serene and steady light, for the comfort and guidance of man, but a sort of sky-rocket, as it were, capable of great and often marvellous elevation, but which, carrying with it the elements of its own destruction, was liable to explode and expire at the instant of its most intense illumination, leaving not a spark behind to enlighten and direct the admiring but benighted beholder.

“ Now I for one am anxious to avert this moral catastrophe. If truth is to move onward, it must be by rational means—for we can expect no miracles in these days; it has not wings, it has not feet; it must borrow from *you* its hands, feet and wings; and especially it belongs to us to consider, that if error is to disappear

before the coming light which is to fall upon the national mind—we may not say how soon, but sooner or later all men seem to expect—it is a duty to provide in sufficient time, and by such small but earnest beginnings as our resources enable us to undertake, for the period when a reasonable and adequate substitute may be sought for, and ought, by our willing hands and hearts put promptly, vigorously and continuously to the work, to be in readiness for the demand.

“Sir, it is more than time for me to conclude. I will, therefore, sit down, thanking you cordially for your kindness to myself, and animating you by my best wishes and hopes for your future progress and triumph in the cause of Christian Unitarianism, which I believe from my heart is the cause of the truth and simplicity as it is in Jesus.”

In the same year he preached at the meeting of the Western Union at Exeter, and in the report of the “Western Times” (May 11, 1839) he is thus described :

“The Society was addressed on this occasion in a most powerful and luminous sermon by the Rev. George Armstrong, lately a beneficed clergyman in Ireland, now one of the pastors of Lewin’s-Mead chapel, Bristol. He is undoubtedly a very fine and accomplished preacher. His style of composition is Miltonic, and his elocution highly effective. In some of his startling tones, and especially in the overwhelming rapidity and sustained energy of his utterance at times, he reminded us strongly of Lord Brougham. We understand that he is to preach at George’s meeting in this city on Sunday morning next.”

But a sweeter note of praise to his kind heart at this the commencement of his ministry under such novel auspices, would be the knowledge that his words had found their way as springs of consolation and of hope to the gentle soul of a sweet lady, a member of his congregation, summoned to an early grave in this same year (1839).

“In compliance with your request,” he writes to her afflicted husband, “I have the mournful satisfaction to send you *once again* the sermon for which you have asked.

"The communication you made me the other day has deeply affected me—yet not without feeling of comfort too, the deepest of comfort, that anything I had ever said or written had added, in however small a degree, to the happiness or improvement of one whom I mourn as I have never mourned one equally unconnected with me before. Deeply, deeply thankful shall I be to Him who in the midst of chastening so tenderly remembers mercy, if among the instruments He designs for ministering comfort to the bereaved, it may be my enviable lot, by this or any other means, to lighten one pang or lessen one throb of a heart whose bitterness I can pity so well because I have shared so largely.

God and Father ! Thou didst give me  
Sorrow for my portion here ;  
But Thy mercy will not leave me  
Helpless, struggling with despair."

In the year following (1840) he was married for the second time, and had the good fortune to secure a companion for his English life, who helped to make it a period equal in happiness and as consolatory in the retrospect as that which he had passed in Ireland ;—golden hours he once thought never could come again.

At the close of this year he had had two years' experience of his new vocation. What his feelings were respecting it at that time, we have an opportunity of judging from the following letter to his namesake, but no relative, the Rev. George Armstrong, of Dublin :

"My dear George,—Some weeks ago I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Andrew Carmichael, containing a mention of you, which afforded me very considerable gratification. I could not but feel a preponderance of pleasure, however *mixed* my thoughts might be, in reference to the effects of your change of profession on your secular well-being. I do indeed most ardently admire your spirit of self-sacrifice, considered in a worldly sense ; and though the best happiness, happiness of mind, must assuredly be yours, I have strong hope and trust that such talents and professional devotion as you will bring to your new

profession, cannot go without the very highest distinction and rewards—scanty as these latter may be—which the exercise of that profession can by possibility confer.

“ Presuming that your resolution has been definitively taken, and that the pulpit is now your object, I would indulge in a reflection or two which my strong regard and long-established intimacy would warrant me, I should hope, in placing before you. You have thrown yourself into the profession of a preacher of Unitarian Christianity at a period perhaps of unexampled difficulty and importance. In earlier times, to preach unwelcome doctrines was a hazard to life and property, and the few strong spirits which committed themselves to that peril had such trust within and such sympathy without in the affirmance of the clearest principles of religious liberty, that the effort was at once repaid, in a manner, by the certainty of triumph over odious laws, or the assurance that their measure of suffering was to be instrumental to a change in favour of liberty which would identify their names with the most honoured benefactors of their kind. *Now* it is different; with much of personal liberty, there is a more diffused, yet peculiarly malignant and untiring, spirit of persecution abroad against the exercise of mind. Because men may no longer be burned or imprisoned or fined or pilloried, the general sympathy has relaxed, and orthodox multitudes rather look on, or listen with approval, while some of the best men and the holiest principles of freedom and truth are made the subjects of scorn and reproach among the professional misleaders on whom they pin their faith and judgment. Yet there is a bright side as well; in proportion as reliance on force has found itself weakened, a constrained resort to something like intellectual expedients has been adopted, and accordingly men argue now with considerable intenseness, however little of acuteness, and preach—oh dear! oh dear! how they do preach! Well, my young brother, we must be glad of this, for we can argue and preach too; and in very shame, to some small extent, we must succeed in getting ourselves heard. I believe in my heart, this—always reposing on the blessing of God—this is the main thing we want—to be heard. In proportion, however, to our earnestness of



aim at this great end, must, it is manifest, be our diligence of preparation, to be heard with effect and with hope of leaving overpowering impressions. Now our Unitarian ministry, for the far greater part, is deficient in this preparation; we have few good preachers, nor is perhaps our learning as systematic as it ought to be. With respect to the latter, I am happy to admit that prospects have recently begun to brighten, and that a few years will witness a rapid and marked amendment; for instance, I cannot but hope well of the Manchester New College, &c. &c. But the *preaching*—here is the rub. What pains, what methods, what plans are about to be taken in this? As yet I know of none; glad I am, therefore, to be in communication on this vital subject with one who knows what effective speaking is, who has practised it, and who, I strongly trust, will continue to practise it with increased success and untiring energy, in the most inspiring, but, in many points of view, the most difficult, of all subjects. Our ministers want the power of extempore eloquence in the pulpit,—a dangerous attempt, I know, before discerning hearers, but one which, under the control of sound learning, good taste and good sense, would be powerful in the service of Christ. A written sermon, as I well know, is a large consumer of time, and, in far the greater number of examples, interferes with the freedom of temperate action and fervour in the moment of delivery. I dare say you have thought of this. But whatever your future practice may be, let me observe to you on the constant necessity there will be of earnestness: banish, oh! banish from Unitarianism, its pulpit and its worshiping services, the reproach, and hitherto most just reproach, of coldness. In composition, never mind pretty figures; use them when they come in your way, but do not hunt after them; always be strong, be logical, be tender, and, whenever argumentative and critical, which should be frequently, be sure to be persuasive as well, and *personal* in dealing with your hearers. I mean, let them think of themselves less as members of a church on earth than as each and all subjects of judgment hereafter at the awful bar of their God.

“You are versed in the oratory of English speakers; a preacher cannot be too much so. Next to the Scriptures, devotionally

and critically studied, the compositions and orations of civilians and divines of highest name, no matter of what church, should be familiar to the memory and imprinted on the taste of a preacher who aspires to make the pulpit an instrument of good. Bourdaloue, Bossuet, Massillon, Hooker, Herbert, Cudworth, Chillingworth, Taylor, Barrow, perhaps Baxter, &c. &c.; and then Bolingbroke, Chatham, Burke, Sheridan, Erskine, &c. &c., with the glorious prose as well as poetry of Milton. Keep up, above all things, the devotional spirit; Unitarians want unction,—a bad thing in its abuse, but precious and the one thing needful in our public services when properly used. We *must* be controversial; we must spare no fallacies, we must yield to no assumptions; but for all these reasons we should the more carefully and religiously be elaborate in our closet and family exercises. Do you take any interest in the Oxford controversy? Have you read Taylor's *Ancient Christianity*? Denouncing with overwhelming power Nicene and Ante-nicene theology, he is a woful thorn in the side of the Tractists. I have just got Gladstone on *Church Principles*, &c.; he is an M.P., a great and really sincere and highly accomplished champion of the Church, authority, &c. I see he has honoured me with a notice in his *Appendix*. This question, I doubt not, as it is now argued, you have made yourself master of," &c.

In the year 1841, the Anti-Corn-Law League was making immense efforts for the enlightenment of the country upon the subject of Free Trade, and among its arrangements for that purpose was a conference of ministers of religion at Manchester. The Rev. W. James, then at Bridgwater, wrote to Mr. Armstrong, suggesting that he should attend it. The proposition was one which met with his cordial sympathy, and he proceeded at once to lay the letter containing it before the Committee of Lewin's-Mead chapel, together with the following observations of his own:

"I beg to enclose to you a letter which I this morning received from our friend Mr. James, of Bridgwater. I have thought very much of its contents; and have put myself to a severe

self-examination on the subject. I have wished to separate the unquestionably strong political feeling which associates itself with the question in my mind, from the strictly moral and religious considerations which ought perhaps to be the sole and proper limit of any proceeding to be taken by a society purely religious in its character, such as ours.

“How far I may have succeeded in effecting this separation, in the view I have formed of the subject, I must leave to your judgment. In one point of view, I hold it to be obvious that, in their highest and largest sense, politics do constitute a very important portion of personal morality—I mean the duty of *perfect integrity* in forming and giving effect to our judgment on that which affects so deeply and extensively the welfare and happiness of our fellow-creatures. Any personal act—as that of a vote or other support by which we become parties to a result involving the most stupendous interests—ought not to be one undertaken lightly or discharged dishonestly. What the particular measure, or who the parties we should rely on, might be—these for the most part would constitute the matter of politics in their narrow and more limited sense,—and being subject of opinion, to its free and full operation they should be left. All that morality, and with it religion, insists upon is, that for the due discharge of an act the most momentous in which a member of society can engage—his vote or other support—he previously take all proper means of enlightening his understanding, and, having so done, to suffer no personal considerations whatever to sway him in the giving effect to the opinion he has formed.

“Here, then, properly and ordinarily, the connection of politics with religion ceases.

“But it cannot fail to be observed that, occasionally, some prominent subjects will start up when the connection cannot be so easily dissolved. I need name only slavery, war, and religious persecution under the sanction of law. The Society of Friends every year protests against war. Dissenters of every description especially, by their combined and energetic demonstrations, contributed very essentially to the overthrow of slavery throughout the British dominions; while it will be superfluous to remark

on the struggles which for so lengthened a period of time, and finally with so large a measure of success, engaged the best efforts of those bodies whose interests were involved in purging legislation of the crime of religious persecution.

“And now, by that order of Providence which inseparably connects evil with error, another great item in the permissible subjects of religious discussion seems to present itself in the social distraction and misery consequent on laws which operate to the fearfully diminished supply of food to the dense millions of the working population of this country. Now it does, I confess, strike me that this in a very peculiar manner becomes a question of practical religion. We have societies in connection with our congregation—as, no doubt, is the fact of every other congregation—whose object is very mainly the relief of the poor from the pressure of destitution. I ask, then, whence for the most part arises this necessity for our intervention? From that want of employment which would supply the families of the needy with bread for their children, medicine for their sick, and comfortable lodging and apparel for their shelter and covering. Is this no fitting subject for the charitable and humane among us to think about? Is it nothing to see hordes of half-famished families with nothing to turn their hands to but evil, when these hands could be profitably employed in manufacturing for the wants of the world, were there no artificial impediments placed in their way? And is it, moreover, nothing to be added to the account, that we preachers of the truth of God are deprived of one great means of redeeming his people from evil by being forbidden and disabled from promising them even that alleviation of Divine mercy to them in their fallen condition, that they shall eat of their bread by the sweat of their brow? They cannot eat that bread which they are not permitted to earn! The truth is, that much of revolting and sickening destitution as your ministers, your visitors and your missionaries are doomed to behold in this city of Bristol and this section of England, no words can convey the disproportion which exists in our favour, as compared with the horrible extremity of misery which affects the manufacturing districts, of which, fortunately or unfortu-

nately, we in this portion of the country know so little—or witness rather so little—for *know* it we *ought*, and, knowing it, should do what we could to arrest, to remedy and prevent it.

“These people who suffer tell us they would be above want if they were only permitted to work. And shall we not listen to their cry? Will any candid, thinking man believe that the recent elections have spoken the voice of the people? The house-holding voters—instance Liverpool—have indeed in most large places spoken unequivocally. The non-electing classes have long spoken, and continue now to speak so. The venal and dependent voters only have spoken as corrupted or commanded by the depraving and coercing influences which have been brought to bear upon them.

“We are not to assume, then, because the people have not availed themselves of the opportunity recently afforded them, that therefore they are not suffering. They are suffering and must suffer—or else by some dread convulsion endeavour to extricate themselves—unless by the timely, temperate but resolute interference of the good, the wise and the pious, the deadly effects of our existing legislation be removed, and that quickly, by the adoption of enlightened, impartial and comprehensive laws.

“I believe the contemplated movement in Manchester—judging by precedents in the past and the exigencies of the present—to be not only justifiable, but commendable and strongly called for. I shall regret it if my views should fail to meet with your approbation; but trusting in their favourable reception, I remain, &c.,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.”

The Committee of Lewin's Mead fully concurred in the view taken in this letter, and his journal records in due course his visit to Manchester.

“Aug 16. Early breakfast, and then by coach to Gloucester; thence by train to Birmingham and to Manchester, there to attend the ‘Conference of Ministers’ in connection with the Anti-Corn-Law League.

"Aug. 18. Nothing very novel in the course of this day. The deputations from different bodies of operatives had presented themselves on the preceding day; and no short description here could render justice to the deep impression produced by the manly, modest and intelligent expression they severally gave of the want that depressed and the wrongs that so fearfully affected them.

"Had a good deal of conversation with Mr. Brook Aspland, who kindly pressed me to visit him at Dukinfield.

"Aug. 20. This was the closing day of our memorable Conference, and as yet neither the representative of Lewin's Mead nor any voice from Bristol had been heard for more than a moment or two on some incidental matter during the progress of our meeting, I determined this should no longer be. I suggested to our Chairman of the day, the Rev. Mr. Spencer, Rector of Hinton Charterhouse, near Bath, that it was my desire to speak. This worthy and gentlemanlike person speedily found me an opportunity for addressing a few words to the Conference, as full, perhaps, at this moment as at any period of the week, comprising, I should say, not fewer than 12,000 to 15,000 auditors. My observations were brief, for I had no specific subject in hand, but they were well heard and respectfully listened to.

"Easter Sunday, March 27, 1842. Took the introductory service, on occasion of my colleague's, the Rev. Wm. James, first appearance and address as our settled minister. A very beautiful and *able* discourse by him on the 'Duties of the Ministry,' including a statement of its true position and authority in the Christian church. This discourse made a deep impression, and I humbly pray to God that to *myself* it may prove a lasting blessing. Again heard Mr. James in the evening, on the text, 'Brethren, pray for us.'"

Another interesting event in his life during this year was his forming one of a deputation to present an Address to the Queen on the birth of the Prince of Wales. He gives the following lively account of it:

"Saturday, April 9, 1842. Drove to Williams's Library, Red-

cross Street, and there met about fifteen other brethren, among whom were Messrs. Rees, Madge, Hutton, Hincks, Tagart, Philp, Bowen, Cromwell, Carpenter, Talbot, &c. &c.

“Remained about an hour in the Library, a noble apartment, where was a late breakfast laid, and having heard the necessary arrangements and instructions duly laid down by the Secretary, Dr. Rees, who read various letters which passed between him and the Secretaries of State, we were all allotted our several carriages and proceeded therein to Buckingham Palace, where, amid troops of foot-guards and troops of servants and halberdiers, we alighted, and in due time found ourselves in a waiting apartment, thence to be summoned into the Royal presence. Prior to this important moment, Sir W. Martin, one of the household, came in to talk over the necessary forms, and was very obliging and communicative. We then for some minutes had an opportunity of looking into the private grounds at the back of the Palace, which were extensive and beautifully kept; one thing, however, much struck me, the extreme neglect observable as to cleaning Her Majesty's windows, at least in the apartment which we had the honour to occupy—very possibly one which Her Majesty never sees—proof sufficient of what *eye-servants* she has the misfortune to be surrounded with. Wherever *she* treads, all is brilliant; but, alas! *within* as well as without her Palace, things obscene and squalid exist, upon which her royal eye is never permitted to rest.

“My contemplation, however, on these domestic irregularities under the queenly roof, was soon interrupted by a summons to attend Her Majesty in the Throne-room. Our passage thereto was by the grand staircase, decorated at frequent intervals by guards, yeomen, aides-de-camp and footmen, the last in the series of which, throwing open a folding-door, disclosed to us the Queen on her throne, Prince Albert at her left, with the sundry officers of her household; her Ministers on the right; nearest to her, Dowager Lady Littleton, a lovely woman, and the Duchess of Buccleugh. Beyond them, on the Queen's right, Sir James Graham, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Hill, Lord Stanley, &c. &c. Peel was not there. Having arranged ourselves at ‘a civil

distance' in a crescent fronting the Sovereign, the Rev. Dr. Rees, our Secretary, was presented to the Queen by Sir Jas. Graham, Secretary of State for the Home Department, and our object having been made known, and the ancient privilege of the Presbyterian body to offer their fealty to the Sovereign on the throne duly set forth, with gracious recognitions of the same by approving looks from Victoria, our Address was read by the Rev. Mr. Madge, expressive of our loyal joy at the birth of a Prince of Wales, and of our thanks to the Ruler of rulers for his gracious preservation of Her Majesty in periods so trying to her and so deeply interesting to her devoted and affectionate people, &c. On the close of the Address, which was a very impressive and dignified one, Her Majesty's reply was handed to her by Sir James Graham; this she read with the most perfect precision of utterance, and with a voice so audible, clear and sweet, that one might almost say she had been trained upon the stage or studied in the school of Siddons. The reply was short, but read with emphasis, and not without traces of emotion when reference was made to our prayers for Divine blessings on her and her royal husband and offspring. This finished, she presented her hand to be kissed by Dr. Rees and Mr. Madge, *two* only of all bodies or deputations, by a recent rule found necessary for the convenience of Her Majesty, being entitled to that privilege. Upon this Dr. Rees announced the names respectively, first of the London ministers, then of the visitors from more distant parts, of which I was named first,—each, as his name was called, presenting himself to Her Majesty's notice, and bowing with such grace as he could, she acknowledging by a courteous inclination of the head. Thus much accomplished, our body had to retire, face foremost, or rather *hindmost*, for we had to look still on Her Majesty, and, bowing as we receded, find our way out with such ingenuity as we could.

“There was throughout a great solemnity; every countenance was serious; and, except some apparent indication of cordiality in Her Majesty, nothing that could impair the resemblance of the whole scene to a *tableau vivant*.

“It was nevertheless an interesting picture to such as had



never looked on Royalty under similar circumstances before; and I for one retired extremely gratified, and loth enough to take my eye from off this gentle, tiny, little thing of State, who, notwithstanding her smallness of stature, looked and sat and spoke with such an air of grace and dignity, as well to become the lofty style and station of Her gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria.

“Our ceremony over in respect to the Queen, our next duty was to present her Royal Consort with an Address, preparatory to which we were conducted through a magnificent picture-gallery to a saloon adjoining, where we were to await our summons to the Prince’s apartments. On entering the gallery, after leaving the Queen, the object most conspicuous which arrested our attention was no other than the *mighty great* Daniel O’Connell, Lord Mayor of Dublin, with sundry of the *reformed* corporation thereof, who had come for the same purpose as ourselves. Dan looked right well, and no Cardinal ever became a scarlet robe better. In fact, Dan looked all in his glory, and, with a native leer of exuberant richness, gave token of being more than commonly pleased. He was the first Catholic Mayor of Dublin who had come before an English King or Queen for 300 years. Some of our party, Messrs. Madge and Hincks, on recognizing him, went up to speak to and congratulate him. After a lapse of some ten or fifteen minutes, we were again motioned in the direction of the Prince’s apartments, and presently were ushered before him to offer him our special respects. He stood between two officers, and received and answered our Address with great courtesy and extreme propriety of manner and expression. He speaks with hardly any perceptible foreign accent, and is certainly what young ladies would most correctly call an exceedingly *nice young man*.

“Having with nearly similar form, though with much less embarrassment or effort to ourselves, withdrawn from the presence of the Prince, as we had before from that of the Queen, we had then to encounter the delay and inconvenience of waiting for our carriages in the hall,—a numerous deputation from the *orthodox* Dissenters, called the Three Denominations in and about

London, in the mean time coming down the stairs, after having discharged a similar duty. In no long time, our carriages having in their due order driven up to the door, a royal footman assisting to let down the steps, &c., we severally drove off, keeping as nearly as we could in line, for St. James's Palace, where our last duty was to present an Address to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. We had not long to wait: Colonel Cooper, her equerry, having previously conversed for a moment with us in the waiting-room, which was in fact a plain though handsome family dining-room, he proceeded to inform the Duchess of our arrival; and an usher, or as he seemed more probably a sort of butler in full dress, presently after conducted us to a room up stairs, in which we found as yet no one. But on looking to a corner door communicating with another room, immediately our attention was engaged by Col. Cooper leading forward a good-natured, elderly, homely-looking person, in a plain purple silk dress, and with looks expressive of the most perfect cordiality and kindness,—who was no less a person than the justly respected Mother of our Queen. Simplicity and kindness were the conspicuous points of interest in this by far the most pleasing of our interviews. She seemed—no, not to be at a loss for words, for she expressed herself with promptness and warmth—but to be *anxious to find words* to assure us of the pleasure she had in seeing us, and of her admiration of the beautiful and affectionate Address, as she feelingly called it, which it was her happiness to receive from us. Words to this effect she spontaneously repeated both before and after reading her prepared reply; and such was her true graciousness and kindness of manner to ourselves, as well as her evident strength of affection for her ‘beloved children,’ as she called them, that we were all more delighted and in fact more impressed with this part of our Court ceremonial than with all we had seen and heard before. As I remember in some anecdote of the Hardinge family, recorded in Nichols's Collection, some member of that family having said of her royal husband, the Duke of Kent, with whom he had been on a visit, ‘How can one help loving such a man?’ so each one of our deputation felt, and many of us said, ‘How can one help loving such

a woman?" And thus ended our Court adventures. Retiring to our carriages, we once more found ourselves in the thronged city, and I and my party returning to the Library in Red-cross Street, we there unrobed, and having partaken of a well-laid-out luncheon of cold meat and wine, soon after bid each other a hearty good-bye.

"July 31. To Trowbridge, to preach two sermons for Mr. Martin's Sunday-schools. . . . . The chapel was singularly neat, yet venerable in its aspect—an endowment of 200 years ago, for General Baptists; that is, retaining baptism of adults by total immersion, with free or unrigorous communion, and perfect absence of all *doctrinal* condition or even allusion in the trust-deeds. The people, therefore, are Baptists in form, but simple-creeded Christians in faith, believing with all faithfulness and earnestness, according to the words of the Lord Jesus, the Father as the *only* true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; and those of Paul, 'There is but one God, the Father; and one Lord, Jesus Christ.'

"The crowds were at the first service very considerable. The chapel seats 800, and it was full. My address was painful from *the heat*, but acceptable to my hearers from *its warmth*. How could a person preach *coldly* on such a day to such a people? Service for the present ended, and a hasty cup of tea disposed of, retired to my snug little bed-room to read over and perfect myself in my more important and lengthy discourse for the evening service, which was to commence at six. Mr. Martin having gone on, Mr. Short, of Warminster, who had come to attend the evening service, was left to be my escort and my *monitor*. A very needful office; for I was so intent on my rehearsal, that the *time* was rapidly passing unobserved, and Mr. Short had to tap at my door. Yet still imagining I might go on a minute longer, again my monitor had to tap, telling me our time was already up. At length Mr. Short succeeded, and took me off with him, my 'looking over' not yet completed. The approach to the chapel was difficult. The neat little yard or court in front (a burial-ground) was itself full of people trying to get in. The aisles and passages were crammed. Not a spot

for an additional person even to stand on. It was necessary, however, that I should get to the vestry-room, and there I robed and proceeded during the introductory hymn with my re-perusal, not without danger of serious interruption from the pressure of the throng against the door of the vestry, which Mr. Martin was obliged to guard for fear of its breaking in! Finally, the moment could no longer be postponed when I was to ascend the pulpit; and difficult as its accomplishment was, and almost intolerable the extremity of the heat, even had I only to look on, instead of undertaking the passionate delivery of a very lengthened harangue,—still with all this the effort was worth the making, from the rare excitement and animation of addressing, from what I might call a Unitarian pulpit, so dense a crowd of breathlessly attentive hearers. Oh, it was delightful and inspiring! And the more so from the irrefragable evidence afforded by this day's and especially this evening's experience, that the pure and lofty and touching truths of Christ's holy gospel presented in its *simply Unitarian aspect*—that is to say, at least with the total *preterition* of orthodoxy in any one of its parts,—that such views, brought out with plainness and pressed home with fervour, are all in all to the human heart, wherever that heart can be found unvitiated by university theology or parson-engendered bigotry!

“Oh, that my own poor soul were responsive to the blessed and unshackled truths to which my spirit gave assent and my lips gave utterance on this happy and memorable night!

“There could not have been fewer present, inside and outside the doors, than 1000 to 1100 persons. The schools, boys and girls, consisted of 270 children, 60 teachers and 4 superintendents. They were admirably trained in singing, giving light and shade, softer and fuller sounds, with excellent and touching effect. The choir, too, accompanied by a small but sweet organ, was extremely good, and got through an anthem in first-rate style.

“Really, what Mr. Martin has done by his simple but zealous piety, by his excellent sense, and unwavering devotion of heart and soul, of mind and person, to the service of that Heavenly Father and that dear Redeemer whom he truly loves, cannot be thought of without admiration for himself and gratitude to the Providence

that has graciously placed him in such a scene of usefulness, and blessed him with the power to work so well and faithfully in the vineyard of his Lord!

"Aug. 1. Walked about Trowbridge with Mr. Martin. Visited several families of operatives and shopkeepers, &c. &c., and conversed with them on religious subjects. All deeply devoted and happy, in the midst of divers trials, in the profession of their pure and simple faith. . . . .

"On reflecting on my visit to Mr. Martin, I have thought it would be a great good gained if he could establish a sort of *Pastoral College* under his care,—an institute for the instruction of young ministers, or candidates for the ministry, in the *practice* of the pastoral office. If a connection of this sort could be established with the New College, Manchester, it would, I doubt not, prove to be one of the best experiments ever made for giving *life and power* to the ministry of truth among our body. We must see to it. Mr. Martin is capable of even more good than he has already done.

"Aug. 14. At Weston-super-Mare. On a lovely day started for Kewstoke church, which we reached at last, after a very broiling walk. Just before we came in sight of this little country church, we sat down on the grass, and in complete seclusion overheard the chimes. It was truly charming, and forcibly drew from me the reflection, Were the *charities* of the Church equal to her *exterior beauties*, what blessedness it would be! Reflection and rest being over, we advanced to the church, and, passing through a group or groups of rustic folks, were shewn into a pew. It was very ancient, very simple and small withal, but capacious enough for its rural congregation.

"The sermon was to be for the Church Missionary Society. And the preacher, a Mr. Veitch, much interested us from the comeliness of his person and countenance, and the remarkably good sense and cleverness with which he adapted himself in manner and matter to the auditory he had to address."

The latter end of the year (1842) was marked by a painful event, the death of the noble-hearted, generous and gifted Channing. The news reached Mr. Armstrong on the 31st of October,

and on the day after we find his mind and his pen both occupied, as we might expect, with a subject, to him particularly, so deeply interesting and affecting. To the writings of Dr. Channing, as we have already seen, he considered that he owed much of his peace of mind, contributing as they had done to the settlement of his opinions and the strengthening of his resolutions to be free in the pursuit of truth. He had read and re-read them, had corresponded with their author, and early distinguished, what is now the growing conviction of some of the most illustrious thinkers both here and on the continent, that he, of all writers on religion, had best understood the spirit that was in Christ, and had sent forth the gospel clothed afresh in forms of beauty and of truth to renew its victories where its power was fading, and spread its life-giving waters over the parched and thirsty lands.\*

The following letter to Mr. Charles Dickens was the first written expression of Mr. Armstrong's feelings on this sad occasion :

"Dear Sir,—Under the emotion which the intelligence by yesterday's London papers of the decease of Dr. Channing has been but too well calculated to produce, I may hope perhaps to be pardoned by a mind so exercised in sympathy and so capable of appreciating earnest feeling as yours, for the liberty which, in other circumstances, it would doubtless be, of addressing you, personally a stranger as I am, in so free and familiar a manner; yet I own I could not prevail with myself to accost you as one unknown or even unendeared. I have but quite recently looked into some of your 'Notes on America,' and among them my eye caught with joy, while my heart re-echoed, the expression of your just panegyric—for I will not call it flattering mention—of my distinguished and ever-to-be-lamented friend. *This* it is which, during these moments of anguish, places you so near that

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\* The writer cannot forbear quoting a passage from a letter which he received lately from M. Laboulaye, the distinguished Professor of Comparative Legislation at the College of France, in which he makes the following allusion to his translation of Dr. Channing's works into French: "Channing que vous aimez est certainement l'homme qui a le mieux compris l'avenir, et j'espère qu'en propageant ses idées en France, nous servirons la France et la civilisation."

heart, whose cherished feelings of admiration and love for that foremost of men, those words of yours, and that probably latest European testimony we have of his rare worth and excellence, so truly and deeply gratified.

“But, Sir, I have further thoughts to express. Throughout the English world, both old and new, you are perhaps the most universally known and accepted author now living. To a reflective and susceptible, and therefore to a virtuous, mind like yours, what a subject for awful yet thankful meditation! What a capacity, and therefore what a responsibility, for good or ill, to be placed in one hand, to be laid on one soul!

“Moving, then, in the direction of the good, the true, the just, the attraction of your mind to its own like in others must be a fact at once to be assumed. It is the attribute of excellence, as Channing I think has somewhere said, to appreciate excellence; and therefore I will further assume that, however unprepared you may be for the proposition, I do not offer to your thoughts any unwelcome, far less uncongenial, task, in imploring you to seize this opportunity, which Heaven cannot have meant to offer in vain, for fixing the attention of the reading world, on both sides the Atlantic, on the character, the genius and the writings of that holiest of men and most gifted of Christian teachers, whose removal in personal presence from among us is now the grief of so many hearts, and for a time to come will be and must be the theme of so many ardent and eloquent effusions of tongue and pen.

“Let it not be said of one who has had so late an opportunity of judging from personal intercourse, and that one so signally gifted with the spirit to feel, and the power to utter, and the influence to diffuse as well as to impress, his own perceptions of true greatness and excellence,—let it not be said of him that the enviable opportunity was lost of rendering so great a service to his fellow-men and so just an honour to departed worth. What a ferment in the literary world would be the announcement of ‘An Essay on the Character, Genius and Writings of the late William Ellery Channing, D.D., by Charles Dickens, Esq., Author of the Notes on America, &c. &c.’ Undertake it, and thousands upon thousands living and to come will bless you for the deed!

“And now, by way of further impulse, I would just add some few notices from the press, which I have collected from time to time, expressive from various quarters of the rare claims of Channing to the venerating recollection of mankind. From Southey, in the *Quarterly Review*, some years ago, we have the following short but strong panegyric: ‘Dr. Channing, one of those men who are a blessing and an honour to their generation and their country.’ (No. LVI., p. 535.)

“From Blackwood: ‘This gentleman, without any question, may rank among the first sermonizers that ever lived.’ (Sept. 1824.)

“From the Scotsman newspaper: ‘Dr. Channing is a man whom we venerate on this side of idolatry; we admire his stupendous intellect, and rejoice to see that it is associated with a purity and loftiness of sentiment, a genuine philanthropy and a fearless love of truth, which ensure its application to wise and noble ends. On all questions connected with the moral nature of man, his destiny and station in the universe, we regard the mind of Dr. Channing as *by far the greatest in the world!*’

“‘He would read to them the opinion of one of the most eloquent men of this age—he wished he could say of this country, for he would be an honour to any country—he meant Dr. Channing.’ Charge to the Grand Jury of Somerset, summer assizes, 1833, by Baron Alderson, in allusion to a sentiment of Dr. Channing’s on the duties of government, in Part II. of his *Essay on Napoleon*.

“It cannot be doubted that, as compositions merely, some of Dr. Channing’s finest efforts must have come under your notice; of his general essays, I should say that those which have most captivated myself are his character of Napoleon, more particularly the second part; his essays on Milton and on Fenelon, together with his later productions on occasion of the threatened connection of Texas with the United States. Of his theological, it would be difficult for me to speak in terms which might not be put down to enthusiasm; but all men, I believe, are ready to acknowledge that his *Dudleian Lecture on the Evidences of Christianity*, March, 1821, is one of the most precious contribu-



tions that genius ever conferred on sacred truth,—so vigorous, so logical, so original, yet throughout so suasive and so mild. When I say all men—I mean men of all parties—have looked upon this treatise with admiration, I do not, because I cannot, include those who seem to have an incapacity to be satisfied of truths of this nature.

“One other production, a defence of his theological views, his Baltimore sermon of 1819, I may take the liberty to mention from its peculiar relation to my own destiny. Bred to the profession of the Church, and at that period in the possession of a benefice in the diocese of Down, in Ireland, I met with this tract; its perusal was to me a new revelation, its effect was irresistible; and from that hour I never felt ease until I had for ever disengaged myself from obligation to a Church whose tenets Dr. Channing had profoundly convinced me were not and could not be in unison with Christian truth. Never till then had I felt the joy of what it was to be convinced, and ever since then it has been my effort and prayer to prove, by my devotion to the cause of truth, the depth of my obligation to Almighty God, and, under Him, to that true and glorious servant whom He has now called to his reward, for the blessing derived by me from my knowledge of the mind and thought of Dr. Channing.

“But little remains for me to add. Many occasional references, all indeed laudatory in their tone, I have met with in the writings of persons who have visited America and have been led to the dwelling of Dr. Channing. But the description most graphic and interesting of all I have ever seen, is contained in the pages of the *Athenæum* of January 3rd, 1835; unless indeed I might mention another in the *London Monthly Repository* for June, 1830, p. 408. They are apparently from the same hand, and are worthy of remembrance and reference by any who would collect the evidences of the high station maintained by Channing in the estimation of competent judges in his own day. What he is to be thought of by posterity, the force of his own great genius has perhaps already determined; but the honour to him cannot be slight who shall have the will as well as the power to add one drop to the current which is to bear his name to distant genera-

tions of thinking, virtuous and Christian men. May that honour be yours, and with that wish," &c. &c.

A letter from Mr. Dickens in answer, declining the task, seems to have called forth the following reply :

"My dear Sir,—I pray you to accept my hearty acknowledgments for the kindness, however unsatisfied I may have been at the determination, conveyed in your answer to my letter. And yet I cannot say I do not fully admit its force; this I do, notwithstanding my own regret that circumstances entirely justify the view you have taken and the decision you have come to.

"I could not doubt what your feelings of the incomparable Channing would be, and truly may I accord with you, that nowhere on the globe was the influence of such a man so much wanting as in the land where his lot was providentially cast. Yet let us hope that even to have had such a light among them, possessing as they will so many of its choicest rays in the writings he has left, may exercise a guiding and saving power over the world generally, and his countrymen in particular. Channing used to say, he did not care *where* progress was made or light broke forth, provided it was *anywhere*. This to him was the great thing; he had faith that it must finally spread everywhere. I apprehend his memoirs will emanate from a quarter well able to do so great a subject justice; but doubtless on this point you are better informed than I can be.

"It fell to my duty—a grateful though melancholy one—to deliver a discourse last Sunday, as a tribute to his memory; frail offering, but clothed with the sighs and watered with the tears of one who loved him much. My people wish it to be printed, and I cannot decline; you will perhaps allow me to ask you the favour of accepting a copy. But, intermediately, I have to ask your pleasure on another point: if it would not be disagreeable to you, I should feel it a privilege to be permitted to prefix in a short preface the expression of your deep interest in our lamented Channing, as conveyed in your note to me. As your literary projects are already announced, it would, I apprehend, involve no inconvenience to you, while I am sure it would

give no slight pleasure to many here and to some in America, who will be readers of the humble sequel to which your note would form so interesting an introduction."

To Mrs. Channing he wrote as follows :

" Nov. 23, 1842.

" Madam,—You will permit me in few words to offer you the condolence of one who, with every recollection of his memory and feeling of his heart, can testify the strength of his conviction that few, if any, have ever had deeper personal cause for grief than yourself. The removal of such a companion and such a friend as Dr. Channing from the society of those who must have so dearly loved as well as justly revered him, cannot be reckoned among the ordinary calamities of our human lot; but time with its soothing hand will allay even this affliction, uncommon though it be, and then the 'peaceable fruits' of that blessed religion he so truly taught and loved, we cannot doubt will be yours in abiding power as well as abundant measure. May God in mercy soon grant it, and fill you with all joy in the Christian hope of seeing him, knowing him and loving him for ever, in the company of the blessed !

" I offer with humility, but tender respect, a slight tribute to the memory of our departed friend, which I trust you will allow a place among the many testimonies you will receive of the honour and love in which he was so extensively held. It is a sermon delivered by me in Lewin's-Mead chapel, Bristol, on the morning of Sunday, Nov. 6th. I send it through the medium of Messrs. Harden and Lee, according to the recommendation stated in the printed circular I have had the honour to receive from your family: together with this I also send, in part compliance with the request contained in the circular, copies of the letters which it has been my happiness to receive from Dr. Channing. They are few but precious, and fewer, I grieve to say, than they might have been, had I taken better care in the arrangement of my prized correspondence. Letters of Dr. C. I have, one in particular, of deepest interest to myself, which I cannot now recover among my papers. I cannot allow myself to think I could have suffered a letter from him to be lost, but for the present I grieve

to say that that letter, and I believe one other at least, are not available for the occasion to which the circular refers.

“ You will not wonder that I have shrunk from parting with the originals themselves of the few which I have; but I have done the next most requisite thing; I have had them carefully copied and attested; and I persuade myself that you will be of opinion that such copies are adequate to the purposes contemplated in your circulars.

“ I send this letter by post, as I understand no letters can safely be put under the same cover with a parcel for America. It will apprise you of my proceedings, and will afford a double chance of your hearing how much I am thinking of and for you. It is to me a melancholy thought that after a long interval—too long—of silence on my part, twice in the course of the last month I should have sat down to write to Dr. Channing, or rather, I should say, that my first letter was to leave England on Monday, October 3rd, the very day after the occurrence we are deploring; while again, on the 31st October, I placed in the hands of a young lady, then about to leave immediately for Boston, another letter at her request for the same destination, but never to be realized. But few minutes had passed after my last messages of kindness, when for the first time the tidings came upon me that these messages could never be received: unimportant as that letter is in itself, I feel tempted to put it in my intended parcel for Boston; it may perhaps have some interest for your eye.”

“ Feb. 1843. In this month and the two following, our lectures on Unitarianism were well sustained and drew large numbers. On Easter Sunday evening I gave a supplementary lecture on ‘ Church Union,’—rather philosophical, perhaps, for the general comprehension, but to my own mind satisfactory and demonstrative.

“ In the month of February, an urgent invitation to preach for their Domestic Mission induced me to visit Birmingham for that purpose.

“ In March, it devolved on me, in the rotation of our lecturing rambles, to visit Taunton and Bridgwater.

"In April, had much very busy and important occupation. First, the completion of my course of lectures. Then our Easter meeting at the Montague Rooms, which was very crowded, very animated, and I trust not a little useful. My appeal on behalf of the 'Inquirer' newspaper admirably well received and responded to.

"On the following evening, had to present myself at a Bristol Anti-Corn-Law meeting, where I was so fortunate as to make an effective and successful speech. And on the next evening, another speech at a prodigious gathering of the Dissenting and Liberal interest of Bristol against the Educational clauses of the Factories Bill. After that, preparations for campaign in Dublin.

"April 30. This formidable day, elaborately announced in all the papers, at length arrived, and I was gratified at meeting a large, intelligent and most attentive succession of auditories at Strand-Street chapel, both morning and evening. Several of my old friends present.

"My utmost efforts were used to vindicate, enforce and recommend our divine principles, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that deep and salutary were the impressions I left.

"May 2. The anniversary meeting of Irish Unitarian Association. The somewhat spacious apartment at the Rotunda filled with a numerous and respectable throng, awaiting the oratory which chiefly from poor me they were hoping to hear during the evening. Andrew Carmichael made a long speech of *overwhelming* approbation and applause conferred on *me*, who therefore had to do my humble best in thanking him and enlightening the meeting.

"May 4. Had a most gratifying opportunity of inspecting the National Schools in Marlborough Street. The singing was admirable, and the mental-arithmetic class quite wonderful. It was the day for special *religious instruction*, and the several clerical instructors had occupied their convenient apartments during the time devoted to this duty, sending back the classes to their regular school business without the slightest interruption of scholastic order, or, what was better still, of good feeling and goodwill.

What a lesson for the bigots of England and Ireland! There were at the schools to-day about one thousand pupils.

“At four o'clock, started on top of coach for Kilsharvan. Arrived at about half-past eight, meeting a warm welcome and a great deal of joking about my grey hair.”

He had grown grey since he had last visited this favourite spot, and this sign of advancing years reminds his biographer that the years are growing fewer and fewer that are left him to follow the earthly pilgrimage of his friend. But they are years of steady usefulness and constant application to the duties of his profession, only interrupted by increasingly frequent attacks of the terrible disease from which he suffered so much and so long.

The extracts already given from his diaries during the first four years of his ministry at Bristol, will afford the readers of this Memoir an insight into this second part of his life, which continued as it began. We will now look at him more particularly as a pastor instructing, warning and consoling his flock. And to enhance the value of his spoken words of religion, love and duty, and shew how deeply his own heart echoed all he said, and throbbed in deepest sympathy with all the lessons that he taught to others, I copy one more entry from his journal during this visit to Ireland in 1843:

“But the thing which gave me far the most pleasure in this gratifying visit to L——, was my reception, first at the hall-door, and afterwards, by various demonstrations during my stay, of his strong affection, by John M——, L——’s butler. This excellent person was in my very early years the servant of my revered and long deceased friend, Mr. L—— R——, rector of Skreen, in the county of Meath, in whose family some of my happiest boyish days were spent. John, almost unaltered in looks, except that he was greyer than myself, his hair being nearly white, and quite unaltered in activity, met me with a warmth, almost an enthusiasm, which instantly went to my very heart. We neither of us had the slightest expectation of meeting, and our mutual surprise was equal to our happiness. Oh!

heavens, but this love *is* lovely! John was certainly always a very superior person, seemingly very much above his station. But why should not gracefulness of manner, and warmth of heart, and beauty of character, be found among the circle of those who minister so much—and might, if they were like John, minister so much more—to our every-day comfort and happiness?

“Would I could say that some who aim to fill a wider and more elevated sphere of usefulness, partook of the amiable spirit of this worthy man! John is a Roman Catholic, I am a Unitarian, and we both love each other, and shew that we do. His former and younger master, the Rev. R—— R——, the successor to the rectory of his father, is what is called of the *evangelical* school of doctrine. The name in many instances seems to be as nearly indicative of the idea to which it purports to be annexed, as ‘*lucus a non lucendo*.’ The term ‘evangelical’ is by no means a proof that the wearer approximates to all the spirit of the religion we find in the ‘evangelists’—at least, if *love* be any necessary part of that spirit. And of this, as illustrated by the example unhappily afforded in my case, I am here reminded.

“Mr. R—— R—— does not like my method of interpreting the divine records, and he thinks the appropriate way of proving that he is a ‘disciple of Christ’ is, that he has *no love* for such a person as I. The poor benighted Roman Catholic rejoices to see me, and gives me the hand and the countenance of love: such is the *man*. The enlightened ‘evangelical’—the accepted of all true believers—the unwearied maintainer of the *Protestant* principle of *private judgment* (for he is *not* a Puseyite), meets me with sour looks, or meets me not at all: such is the *master*. And now which is the Christian?”

## CHAPTER II.

### PASTORAL TEACHING.

It is a favourite saying among the opponents of the Unitarian view of Christianity, that it is only the half-way house to infidelity; and a colouring of truth has occasionally been given to this accusation by the eventual rejection of revealed religion by men who have professed Unitarianism during their passage from "the extreme of superstition to the extreme of infidelity," to use Lord Macaulay's words. But in Mr. Armstrong we have a notable instance of an observation of its advocates which is much nearer the truth, that it is "the resting-place," to complete the sentence of the essayist, "he wonders was never found by men on their way back from the extreme of infidelity to the extreme of superstition." "In the history of religion," says Mons. Laboulaye, in his essay on Channing,\* "I believe that Unitarianism is destined to fill a very important place, for it is the ultimate limit of free inquiry; and, indeed, frankly to confess my real conviction, I believe that in it is contained the real future of the Protestant Church. And for those men—and their number is not small—who feel the need of a belief to fix their thoughts and to satisfy their hearts, but who shrink from the difficulties of dogmatic orthodoxy, it appears to me a most interesting matter to know that there is a system which undertakes

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\* The writer strongly recommends the interesting little volume in which this essay is contained to the attention of his readers. It is entitled, "*La Liberté Religieuse*, par Edouard Laboulaye, Membre de l'Institut." Charpentier, Paris, 1858.



to conciliate the claims of religion and philosophy, not by means of a mutual and contemptuous toleration, but by shewing that Christianity is the crowning result of philosophy, and that revelation is the perfection of reason. If," adds Mons. Laboulaye—and I recommend his observation to some of our English theologians who are wont to disparage Unitarianism as a system of negations and poverty of thought, defended by bad Latin and worse Greek\*—"if a similar doctrine reached us from Germany, enveloped in mysterious formulas and disguised by a cloud of obscure terms, we should welcome it with respect, as we have already done the theories of Schelling and Hegel. Shall we pay less attention to Channing because he did not remain in the regions of abstraction, but spoke in simple language, practised what he thought, and founded more than a school—a church, in whose bosom the most distinguished writers and thinkers of New England have found a refuge?" This church, this refuge for the inquiring mind which seeks the satisfaction of its spiritual wants without the sacrifice of its reason, Mr. Armstrong also helped to build up by his pen and life; and it will be interesting to compare the following extracts from two sermons he delivered at two different periods of his career, the long interval that separates them having been filled by an elaborate course of free inquiry. They will shew that the devotion and trusting faith of his early years lost none of their freshness in the conflict with the doubts and difficulties of his mental life; that the fearless exercise of his reason upon this most important and delicate investigation, the claims of Christ as an inspired teacher to the belief and obedience of man, landed him upon a rock where he built his temple to the living God, and made the most acceptable of offerings on its altar—a life of love and duty.

Extract from a sermon preached at Bangor, co. Down, on January 8, 1826:

"To carry this appeal but one step farther. For how many

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\* Mr. Isaac Taylor has just reprinted, with little respect for his reputation as an accurately informed thinker, an essay on Unitarianism, contributed some years since to the *Eclectic Review*, lamentably deficient both in truth and candour.

seasons have the Christian mercies been detailed to you! How often has the benign and exhilarating advent of the Saviour been heralded in your ears! How often have the surpassing prodigies, 'the miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him,' and the no less surpassing wisdom, of this unparalleled Teacher, been presented to your attention and apparently riveted in your convictions! How often have the afflicting ignominies and the eventful sufferings which terminated his precious existence in the flesh, solicited the affections and demanded the deep acknowledgments of the myriads for whose benefit they were incurred! And with what effect? When (for example) reminded of that death, have you been anxious to testify that its 'remembrance' held the *first* place in your bosoms? Or, have you, when those engaging and pious forms which owe their existence to his own appointment have been offered, and that but rarely, to your acceptance,—have you, with unready souls, retreated to your accustomed commerce with the world, and, making common cause with the recusants in the gospel, presumed to conciliate 'the Master of the house'—the mighty Master of this house—with the miserable subterfuges there recorded? Have you hastened to forget who the bidder to that forsaken banquet is—what the object to which the tribute of your presence was required—what the events and what the benefits were to which your lips were engaged, but the instant before, in avowing your assent, and of which that presence would import your more fixed and animating and deliberate attestation?

"And may these things indeed be affected by the mere caprice of such beings as we? May we, at our own good pleasure, account of them as a thing of nought or a thing of moment?—as nothing or as everything?—as some drivelling and detected fable, or as everlasting and boundless realities? These mighty things! shall the breath of the scorner obliterate them? Shall the unthinking existence of youth impart to them its own instability? Shall the cares of the worldly reduce them to their own nothingness? Shall the wisdom of the wise or the apathy of the ignorant annul the deep purposes of God and palliate their negligence by—'Lord, we did not know,' or, 'We did not hear,' or,

‘We intended at some more convenient season’? No, no, my brethren; if the gospel be true, it will hear of no rival; if God hath spoken, his voice must be heard. If Christ have died and again risen in order to raise us into newness of life here and to an eternity of glory and holiness hereafter, then must we not hazard those hollow and puerile evasions which he himself has exemplified for our perpetual admonition. It is possible,—for, after all, it is no easy task to reach the human heart,—that I have agitated an inquiry which may awaken displeasing reflections in the breasts of some who hear me. If so, I should not regret such a circumstance. My object has been to shew that the habitual and dull profession of certain truths is not religion; nor the frequent rehearsal of sacred things belief; nay, nor even that more solemn and periodical exercise to which my latter remarks have referred, the unexceptional evidence of a truly Christian soul; for even to that exercise I have referred rather as a symptom than a criterion. It is by no means certain that all who do join in it are holy; but it is assuredly a rational conjecture that those who do not join in it (with whatever particular section of Christianity they profess to unite) are of a frame of mind which would argue no very certain claim to that epithet.”

Extract from a sermon preached at Bristol in the year 1840:

“There are many ways of feeling and evincing this power (of faith in Christ), in the exercise and experience of which I would willingly and gladly record my persuasion, that the people to whom I speak are far from deficient. But there is one way of evincing it, with respect to which I know not how far I am justified in acknowledging their claim. I am in some difficulty to ascertain upon what principle, or whether upon any principle at all, the worshipers in this house regulate their attendance at the Lord’s table; whether there are reserved seasons, or periodical occasions, on the return of which most or all, in rotation, who are of qualified age, may be partakers of those elements which typify the doctrine and shew forth the death of the Lord; so that in the course of the year few or none shall have been always,

or even frequently, absent from a duty so grateful to the believer, so useful as an aid to holiness, and so comforting and encouraging, not alone to the ministers of their worship, but to the members of the body with whom they are associated in the profession of a common belief, and to whom their attendance on that solemn rite, the extension to others of their own sensations and convictions, would, in proportion to their numbers, be so impressive a confirmation of the purity and energy of their faith. I repeat, I know not how this may be, and hardly know how I am to acquire that knowledge, consistently with that freedom of action, on the one hand, of which a people must be jealous, and that freedom of utterance of which a minister must be no less tenacious, on the other. But this at least I may say, that I have as yet, on the part of a large number of this congregation, no very manifest signs of recollection that a participation of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper is a matter in which they are the least concerned. I regret this,—regret it deeply,—both because it deprives the ministers of your worship of one satisfactory assurance that they do not minister in vain, and because it deprives the advocates of the truth you profess, of the evidence your zeal would afford that it is a truth according to godliness, and a truth deserving of exertion to bring it home to the hearts and convictions of others.

“If your faith have no power to bring you into communion with your Master, when he asks you to record your convictions and reiterate your vows at his table, vainly, I fear, can you trust to its strength to carry you through any other command or exertion he may lay on you.

“You may be in the habit of professions that, seen through the medium of your purified faith, Christ is to you the wisdom of God; but in such a condition of your spiritual experience, in so utter a destitution of the religious affection, your own conscience will supersede the necessity of any words from me to prove that, as yet, Christ has never been felt by you to be the power of God.

“You know your enemies tell you, you do not believe; that in the Father you acknowledge no holiness, in the Son you ac-

knowledge no mercies, in the Spirit you admit of no comforter; that yours is an ideal belief, an ignorant belief, a cold belief. Whereupon much writing, much learning, much meeting and much talking—aye, and often much warmth, are evinced to convince the world that they do you wrong, and that you are really neither ignorant, nor indifferent, nor indolent, nor cold in your belief.

“Ah! brethren, take care how this matter may be. Take care you may have no nearer witnesses who are cognizant of the truth; take care you have not the witness in yourselves; take care that witness is not this moment in your own hearts; take care it be not in the presence of a Greater than your own hearts, and that the empty benches which you have hitherto left, and will again leave, when Christ is saying ‘Come!’—when Christ is saying ‘Stay!’—shall not testify, too, with the most embittered of your bigoted and scornful enemies, ‘Of a truth this people know not God, love not the Saviour, feel not the Spirit; and with all their pretensions to a purity of faith above the ken of others, are without Christ, aliens from the courts of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise!’”

How the solemnity and beauty of this pious rite, to which he so feelingly invites his different flocks at such different times and under such different circumstances, but with such steady and unaltered faith, was heightened and its impressions deepened by the affectionate and touching tone of the words with which it was his habit to introduce it, the following address will shew. It was spoken on the vigil of Good Friday, April, 1855.

“Christian Friends,—In accordance with a practice which, so far as I am informed or can recollect, is peculiar to our religious denomination, and in it but of comparatively recent origination, we meet together on this eve of the events whose progress has been indicated in the scripture we have now been hearing, to derive from them such benefit as their solemn history is calculated to produce, and, by a more concentrated attention, to realize to ourselves the tone and spirit, and in some sort the *presence*, as it were, of those awful moments or lingering hours during which they were brought to pass.

“In the experience of our human love, there is one circumstance more especially laid up in the faithful heart, as a thing apart and more than commonly sacred, and that is the remembrance of our latest intercourse with endeared friends,—when they were about to part with us, and when all that they said or looked gave forth a tenderness and a sacredness, than which life has nothing more holy, and memory holds nothing more dear!

“Religiously regarded, this fact in our nature may be easily applied to interests, if not more acute, certainly more comprehensive, and greatly more important.

“With time, our liveliest affections more or less change; and the limited powers of our human sensibilities do but wholesomely yield to the necessity of worldly interests, and the mitigating, though far from obliterating, power of varied and new attractions. But we have other affections than those which bind us in earthly loves. Sacred though they are, for the refinements they have nourished and the hopes with which they connect, they do not, and they cannot, compete with those which belong to us, unaffected by the lapse of years, unaltered by the change of circumstance, and, under whatever other change, ‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.’

“One Friend we have, who, though known to us and of all-importance to us, even in our earthly relations, yet has other relations, other concern with us, which accompany us into an eternal world,—governing our condition there, and preparing us for that condition here; and therefore it is for this Friend,—the Friend of sinners, the Friend of souls, Jesus, the Son of God,—we ought to have, and very many desire to have, facilities and opportunities, particular occasions, particular incentives, for bringing him closely before us, impressing us with his last thoughts, instructing us by his dying words, and breathing upon us his undying love!

“Just such an occasion, just such an incentive, is the present. We are meditating on Jesus, as he prayed and agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane,—as he anticipated that morrow when he was to testify his interest in us—even in us—by that token of love, than which no man hath greater to offer, even the giving

of his life to establish in the world that truth which is light to our souls and life to our hearts.

“The truth itself he had taught and lived before,—love to God, love to man, love to the Father, love to his children,—that peace on earth, that hope of heaven, the possession and inheritance of those who accepted those terms, revered those laws, and prayed to be enabled, through faith and grace, to believe in them and to walk in them all the days of their life! These holy truths he had taught and lived in his previous intercourse with the friends and followers of his God-entrusted mission. And it was only to fix, impress and hallow them in the thoughts and memories of those of that day, and of all who through them should believe to the end of the world, that he instituted that last ordinance, took occasion of that last passover together, that he might thereby commemorate to every age the story of his life, the endurance of his love, the beauty of his teaching, and the comfort of his promises—‘This do, as often as ye do it, in remembrance of me.’

“Wherefore, dear brethren, you who are in any trouble of spirit, who feel that you are in a world of much trial, to whom the troubles, and, it may be, even the joys of life, are more than you can always bear with meekness and with true Christian recollection and equanimity;—you, too, whether in youthful or maturer age, prompted by passion or tempted by care, whose conscience may be often wounded, whose spiritual life may be one of frequent pain and struggle, and renewed humiliation and sorrow;—let all such be led to regard in this ordinance here prepared, a means of renovation, recovery and encouragement, just from the deepened impression it is adapted to convey, that you are conversing with Christ, consulting him in your difficulties, leaning on his bosom, and learning from him how truly his Father loves, and how surely his Father saves, all who come to Him in humble but earnest purpose of soul, through Jesus Christ.”

A few more extracts from his later sermons will further illustrate his manner of treating the general topics of Christian thought.

In a sermon on the "Duties of Parents," he thus speaks of infant baptism :

"Do parents sufficiently consider the exceeding weight of responsibility which connects with the nurture and admonition of children, not only as they are candidates for a healthful and useful life in this world, but as children also of the Lord, and as heirs of a life for ever ?

"Can education of such a nature begin too soon or be pursued too earnestly ? You will perhaps ask, When should it commence ? We answer, almost the moment it is given. You will ask again, And how first are we to set about it ? Bear with me when I say, by that form familiar to the Christian church but so little understood ; and therefore, in fact, so imperfectly regarded and cared for by the Christian conscience. By that act which signifies in the parent that he receives this being from God and means to take care of it for God. By a form and by a rite—its peculiar character and detail is of smaller and secondary importance—which shall be a witness before men, and chiefly a witness to ourselves, that we recognize this being as having spiritual *rights* as well as spiritual capacities, and that on our souls will lie the burthen, if that soul, which has been entrusted to us to help and form, shall lose by our neglect or perish by our impiety.

"This is the import and value of baptism. Not a charm, in regard to the being who is operated on, but a holy remembrancer to him who operates. Not to change the infant soul, but to dedicate ; and not even so much to dedicate and consecrate it, as to dedicate and consecrate ourselves. For it is we who need to be holy. A child is already in some sort holy. And whereas God made man upright, but he hath found out many inventions, far must that heart have been gone in evil ways, who can fail in the reverence he owes his smiling babe or his trusting child, by steeping his own soul in sin and unhallowing the home where the household virtues and the Christian life should be known and seen to grow and flourish. Do not parents know how little children, by the affections and necessities of their nature, are accustomed to look up to them ? Do they think of this ? Has it ever crossed their minds ? Then if it ever have, let him who



is in a wrong course of life, whatever his wrong may be, whatever his particular failing or wickedness may be,—the wickedness of drink, the wickedness of debauch, the wickedness of fraud, of lust, of anger, of hate, of pride,—whatever it be, let that man, that sinner, just think, if his child could but know how little worthy of being looked up to he was, with what a weight of amazement and of shame his little heart would be crushed and burthened. Now it is to stir this train of thought in the parent's soul, that we chiefly value whatever instrumentality would be most likely to awaken it, and by the mercy and grace of God to deepen and give it the required impression. And therefore, simply and solely it is, we would resort to the symbolizing waters of baptism. Not as purifying in themselves, but as marking our intentions pure, and our desire that, as that water is pure, so through our helping, our praying, our living, our example, the soul of that little one may be kept pure for the God of purity, through his abounding grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. Therefore we should baptize and baptize early. For our own sake and our child's sake, the spiritual relation that binds us cannot be too soon or plainly declared."

From a "May" sermon for charity schools:

"We justly associate the times of refreshing with the tenderness of youth and the primal season of our human days. But why? Because out of youth, well directed, must come forth all that prophets have breathed of, saints have prayed and patriots have toiled for. 'The coming of the Lord,' 'the reign of Jesus Christ,' 'the kingdom of God on earth,' 'the restitution of all things,' are but equivalent phrases for the culture and prevalence of peace, order, justice, freedom, love, throughout a sinning world and throughout the now divided and distracted nations. And all this good, this blessedness, this heaven, are to be the fruit of what you do and how you care for the 'little children' who are upon the earth.

"Having then 'hope concerning this thing,' let us see what those qualities are in young persons which we should endeavour to repress, and what to foster, to strengthen and to imitate.

“Children, when withdrawn, more or less, from the parent’s roof, undergo a great change,—a great change in experience; often, therefore, a great change in habits. Thrown more together, common engagements, common objects, do not always produce the harmony of a common sentiment. Rivalry steps in, and competition, its milder form, which, although often excellent stimuli, are greatly apt to engender lower feelings and awaken a spirit of unamiable selfishness. And selfishness once indulged, who may put a limit to its ever odious workings?—selfishness in its narrower and meaner sense the most unthrifty and unsafe of guides! It is always aiming at short cuts; yet it is sure to go in the end the longest way round. It aims at immediate gratification, yet is constantly meeting with defeats and contradictions. It will have the largest share in everything; and the consequence is, a conspiracy always on foot to treat it to the smallest. It feels no love, and by a natural consequence never gains it. In its play-time, always disobliging its companions; in its work-time, always over-reaching the master, till it ends in over-reaching itself, by becoming the object of a common aversion; learning nothing well and aspiring at nothing good.

“Such is a vice in the little world of school-life. A vice, indeed, so comprehensive and generic, that it includes within it a number of minor traits alike marked with the traces of their common source. It is seen in the rough and uncouth temper which will not be at the trouble to control itself, and never sufficiently considers the feelings of another to estimate the value and the charm of a soft answer or a kind word. It easily leads its victim to the character of the bully, which is but a short name for the coward exercise of comparative strength. The low care of self, how very low it is! Afraid to quarrel with an equal, ever ready to torment and vex a weaker, companion. Tyranny in the making, and ignoble feeling in the boy, fit preparation for servility in the man, and treason in the statesman! Crabbe the poet, who studied this phase of human nature, has said,

‘Oh, there’s a wicked little world in schools,  
Where mischief’s suffered and oppression rules;  
Where mild, quiescent children oft endure  
What a long placid life shall fail to cure.’

And poor Dr. Arnold, who because he was great and good would not give up the struggle, although it almost drove him mad. 'How to meet this evil,' he says, 'I really do not know; but to find it thus rife after I have been so many years fighting against it, is so sickening that it is very hard not to throw up the cards in despair and upset the table. But then the stars of nobleness which I see amidst the darkness in the case of the few good are so cheering, that one is inclined to the ship again and to have another good try at getting her about.' And he did 'get her about.' This teacher of boys lived to be honoured, loved, almost adored; which shews the root of good which lies in boyhood's nature; and how noble, how much to be exalted and revered the enterprise is which devotes itself to save and nourish for future fruit and much bearing the generous seed which else would be trodden under foot, or overlaid by the ignorance and rashness which know not how to extricate or how to tend it! Honour to the conscientious schoolmaster who 'by patience, by pureness, by knowledge,' goes forth thoroughly furnished unto his noble work!"

Of "union with Christ" he thus speaks in a sermon on the text, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Peter i. 8.

"I am led to set forth, in the second place, by what means or medium this frame of soul is represented in a portion of our text as conveyed into the willing disciple's mind and heart. 'Though now,' says the apostle, 'ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice.' And so we find belief or faith to be the means by which it is effected. It may be said, indeed, that this is a very admitted and quite familiar idea to the Christian mind. I am sure it is. But as there are various kinds of belief, so there are various degrees of being Christian. There is the belief of conviction, the belief of the understanding; and assuredly by none more earnestly than myself could this sort of belief be upheld and appreciated. Never will Christianity stand upon its proper footing until it is embraced as a reasonable religion. It is this which the world at this moment mainly wants. But it is not all it wants. The

religion so recommended is worthy of another sort of belief,—a belief which allies itself with our deeper nature, which stirs the fountains of our love, and which, by meditation and by prayer being wrought into the very heart, brings us into joyous communion with the Object it presents to us and the living Image it portrays.

“I am ready to admit that this is a matter of some nicety. The subject is one of a high order. Christ in us and we in Christ. Such an idea may well fill us with wonder and delight. But care must be taken with what associations the idea is admitted to the mind. For there are two extremes among men: the one belonging to the nominal Christians who do not understand the matter, and, caring nothing about it one way or the other, are only disposed to treat this doctrine of a union with Christ as presumption and mysticism; the other belonging to such Christians as make it—some in a less, some in a more absolute degree—a physical union or material incorporation with Christ. The error of the former proceeds from their not knowing religion as a spiritual subject; that of the latter, from insufficient attention to the difference between spiritual things and figurative representations of them. A deep and fatal mistake, tending to make men of the world disgusted with religion, perplexing plain and sober-minded Christians; and, when thoroughly absorbed, making the professors of such notions often as proud as they are fanciful, and as dangerous as they are credulous. But apart from all this, apart from these errors, union with Christ is a possible and grand reality. According to the economy of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, by express will and appointment of the Father, is the head of all vital influence. I am by profession a Christian. But if the life and mind that were in him be not at all in me,—if I am in ignorance, in worldliness, in sin,—habitual, unchecked, presumptuous sin,—then I have no right to his name, for I have no evidence to myself, to others or to him, of my union with him.

“But if I do really believe in him,—if, in the culture of my religious affections and in hours of holy communing, when no eye nor thought of man is near, the Father have drawn me to see

the dimensions of his goodness and love to my soul set forth in the life and ministrations of his holy Son, then I am in a corresponding state, in corresponding circumstances. Then I am united to Christ, a partaker of him, and derive from him life, strength, comfort, peace. I am, in short, in a condition to understand and to exemplify what is meant by the diversified figures under which this union is represented. A union of compact illustrated by marriage, therefore one of mutual love. A union of spiritual operation, whereby I am made conformable to him and derive my life from his. A union of affiance and dependence, for without him I can do nothing, and through him I can do all things. And so the head, the vine, the foundation, the husband,—all are so many emblems of the Redeemer, and make me to see, to understand and to feel, how truly and how blessedly the believer is united to him."

From a funeral sermon for an eminent physician :

"Like that mighty fluid in nature, whether latent in its repose or destructive in its action, this matter of *admonition* must have its *conductor*; and whether it sleep in the cloud, or threaten in our path, or peril our dwellings, it is well to be armed with expedients for controlling it in its course or converting it to our uses. We know there is a grief which crushes, we see there is a levity and worldliness which forget; but to meet the danger, let us have instruments to point to the skies, and elicit our safety from out the region which else would scathe us with its fires or more effectually benumb us into death. Willingly, therefore, we yield to occasions which fittingly draw us in that direction from whence alone, in every extremity and peril and pain of man, our hope and help can effectually and savingly come. God indeed is very gracious in warning, but man must no less be ready in heeding; yet warning so often is private, so often is local, that men's heeding must be comparatively feeble—must be proportionably limited. It is especially when God strikes the eminent, when God brings low the great, the wealthy, the learned, the proud, the powerful, and even the widely useful and good, the virtuous and the venerable—then it is that He speaks with signi-

ficant organ, and bids men's hearts be wise, bids men's souls be still.

“And so, my friends, God has just been dealing with us. ‘Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble,’ we number in the circle of those who, founding their belief in thought, conducting it in freedom, enjoying it in charity, and nourishing it in reverence to all that the Spirit of God, in contradistinction or defiance of the arbitrary bidding of man, has taught, have neither had wealth to lure, nor splendour to blind, nor power to command, nor dignity or place to invite that adherence, or reward that profession, which have hitherto favoured, if favoured, the more popular denominations of the Christian pale. Such is our condition, and we do not repine at it. I believe we have and will have our reward, and that the time is coming when the statistics of Christendom will have a far other report, a very far different tale, to unfold. Meantime it is but natural that, circumstanced as we are, we should the more be stricken, the more be disposed to heed, when those who have been distinguished among us for eminence, for station and for virtue, have filled up the number of their days, leaving their place for others, and have been summoned by their Lord to render account of the goods committed for a season to their hands.”

In a sermon on “When you pray, enter into your closet,” in which he had been regretting the little interest which Protestants have sometimes shewn in regard to works of art as an aid to religious worship, he thus describes the power of natural beauties to lead our minds to God :

“One thing at least Protestantism in its severer tendency has not been able to do; it has not robbed nature of her power of inspiration; and the lights, the colours, the shades, the sounds, the perfumes, serving as incense, which her boon hands prepare, encircle as within a living architecture the charmed soul, and wrap it as with the presence of the Divine Artificer himself. No need of a closet there; it is all privacy, though it is all variety, all expanse; and how deep may that communing of the Spirit be which is prompted by the simple objects of nature in her

rural dress, and surrounded by the symbols of her peaceful energies! What heart is proof against the litany of the woods and the anthem of the murmuring stream? We have known some who could remain untuned by the harmonious voices of a choir, or untouched by the solemn appeals of a pulpit, but who could neither be untuned nor untouched by the eloquence of nature. The oneness of all God's creation never comes so powerfully before them; the harmony of the spiritual and material is believed because it is experienced; the varied forms without call up an answering recognition from within; they were made for one another, or rather, in the infinite mercy of the Father, all were made for man; and interpreted by him, the dumb creatures and their world, the herd as it grazes at his feet, the flock as it roams in his view, the lamb as it sports at his side, are but a voice which seems to say, 'Thou shalt be in league with the stores of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.'"

Of the power of such scenes over his own soul we shall presently see many evidences, but the following passage in a sermon preached in 1847, will not be inappropriate here :

"The Lord has always his hidden ones. Many more than we are aware of know his name and love his salvation. You may meet with them in every condition, in every situation,—in the highways and by-ways of life, and in circumstances and aspects where you might least be induced to seek them.

"All have been sensible of some beautiful scene in nature. Not only the objects around, but the tints, the sky and the lights from heaven, harmonize and blend in one sacred impression, and seem to issue in a voice which speaks of God, and lifts up the soul to its Maker. In some such scene and in some such mood it was once my happiness to be placed; and in a spirit not insensible to the blessing, my thoughts reverted to that passage in the Psalms, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches!' My musing was arrested by the presence of a stranger. It was a wayfaring man, an humble man, and seemingly a peasant man. I was tempted to accost him. Nay, I was even tempted to ex-

press to him some portion of my feeling,—to speak with delight of the scene,\*—and from the meadows, the woods, the beauties of earth, to glance in reverent allusion at the everlasting beauties of the world which was to succeed it, of the world in reserve for those who love God. The sentiment was met in a manner which not merely satisfied but almost subdued me. This way-faring man, this rustic, had his thoughts, too, with God; and while not insensible to the glories which shed their riches around us, shewed that he had that within him which loved and longed for something higher and better still. Again a passage of a Psalm suggested itself. It was in a little text-book I had in my hand. And under the date of the day on which our meeting occurred, I read the words to him, ‘Shew us thy mercy, O Lord! and grant us thy salvation.’ The wish was in his heart. The little prayer found deep sympathy. Words were needless, looks were enough. We met as men, we parted as brothers; and each proceeded on his way, the more for that meeting rejoicing.

“Well, and why should it not thus be often? Why sit so loose to one another, aye, and often look down upon one another, as we are tempted now to do? Should we not rather think and say, as we meet these casual wayfarers in life, humble and uncouth as they may apparently be, Mayhap there is one who is thinking of God, or with a heart and hand engaged in his work—a stone, it may be, preparing for the building in which it is my humble hope I shall one day be placed myself.”

Again, speaking of Christian fortitude:

“Our whole nature thrills when we hear of magnificent endurance in the midst of perils by land or perils by water,—the great commander unmoved amidst the shock of arms, and the humblest of the veterans who obey his word as energetic yet unperturbed as if they were things of matter instead of heroic mind. These instances of character, these evidences of the greatness of a human will, take us captive, and bind us to them with a fascination and an awe that we cannot get rid of if we would.

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\* The prospect was from a hill overlooking Haddon Hall, in Derbyshire. Allusion to this circumstance will be found in a letter in the succeeding chapter.



“ And yet for greatness, excellence and heroic worth, we could carry the mind, with no real fear of failure in the comparison, to the example of the sufferer for conscience’ sake, or breasting the evils of a wicked and seductive world,—Bunyan in his prison, or Milton in his blindness. The Christian followers of the Lamb, crucified with Christ. Dead to the world, dead to its pride, its vanity, its avarice, its angers and hard-heartedness, its injustice that treads upon the weak, its meanness that fawns upon the great; dead to these things, but alive unto God, through faith in his Son. Alive to all that makes the world loveable and fit to live in,—its blessed charities, its home affections, its large and ever-enlarging sympathies; that has love for little children, partaking in their joys, and pity for the sad and succour for the needy.

“ Oh what power in that Lamb bearing its heavy cross! Oh what beauty and what love in that image of the Shepherd tending and sheltering his wandering and torn flock!”

In times of sorrow, too, when he stood by the grave of departed members of his congregation, he was always ready with words of power, because uttered in faith and love, to console the mourners assembled at the last sad offices. The broken-hearted children of a beloved mother, spared to them even beyond the average duration of human life, but called away too soon—as too soon it ever is—for those who had nestled in her bosom and felt the shelter of her affection “when the world frowned and all other friends grew cold,” would appreciate the balm of such soothing, courage-giving words as these:

“ Christian Friends,—In the solemn office which has called us together, we are necessarily led to reflections the most interesting to human nature, the most touching to human hearts.

“ We are here as witnesses of the humiliating end of all human flesh; we are here as sharers or sympathizers in the rupture of the tenderest of human affections; we are here as joyful yet humble believers in the proclaimed and certified mercies of our Heavenly Father!

“ The departure of the aged is itself a memento of the frailty

of our tenure of all earthly interests. The longest life is but an index to the brevity of our course from the cradle to the grave. 'Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?' 'Behold, our days are even as a span long; and our age is even as nothing in respect of God.'

"But in another particular, the departure of the aged comes home with affecting impression to the hearts of the mourning and the minds of the thoughtful. For how tenacious is the love that cannot bear to part, or would not willingly part, with even the frail and feeble form which has exhausted itself in the duties of life, and is ripe for its passage to the place of rest!

"What eloquent testimony to the worth of our endeared relations, that, when no longer capable of active services,—when themselves the objects of those cares which they had lavished, in their season, upon all who came within the sphere of their tenderness and regard,—when worn with the pains of disease, or depressed by the burden of years,—when 'the days have come, and the years are already arrived, in the which they say, 'We have no pleasure in them,'—even then our love has not slackened, and fond hearts would still retain them, grateful for the opportunity of returning by our reverence and assiduity some measure of the tenderness and love of which we had been the objects when our nurture, our training, our comfort, our prospects in life, and life itself, were dependent on their care, and were the study of their days!

"Yet again: how closely interwoven these affections of the family life, and these regrets at their interruption, however long they may have been averted, with the highest privileges of our nature; and how beautiful and wise the connection that links our dearest duties with our noblest hopes!

"For this prolonged and loving life to which your sorrowing thoughts revert, is it not a pledge, brethren, that sentiments so deep, so habitual, so hallowed, so fertile in many virtues, cannot perish with their immediate object, but that, in proportion to their intensity and their purity, is the assurance of their renewal in a world where separation will no longer be, and tears can no longer flow?

“ It is in seasons like this that the Divine Spirit most distinctly communes with the heart; we lay ourselves open to its holy breathings; we feel the depths of our human love; and, through our own experience, learn to comprehend the dimensions of that love which our Heavenly Father must bear to all his suffering children.

“ And in peculiar correspondence with our needs, this disclosure of the Father's mercy comes to our aid. The closer the tie, the dearer the relation, the more bitter the grief, so much the more earnest the desire, the more sure the conviction, of that preserving and restoring power which the gospel rather proclaims than originates, and which God hath laid up for all his faithful ones, who have walked in his ways, have listened to his voice, and trusted in his promises.

“ As Christian men, then, brethren, we offer you these divine consolations. As believers in a loving God, but most of all as believers in his saving Christ, we ask you not to sorrow as those who are without hope. We enter fully into the character of your griefs; we comprehend the value and can estimate the tenderness of the family tie which has just been broken; we reverence the name of Parent; we could weep at the name of Mother; we can look back with you who this day mourn for the latter, with instinctive sympathy on those long years of homely joy which made life blessed in the interchange of duties and of kindnesses which will ever be sacred in your remembrance, and cannot perish from your thoughts but with life itself; but the more we discern the nature of your sorrow, and the more we mingle our feelings with yours, the more sustained and the more authorized we feel in proffering to you those words of holy comfort—‘ Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God—believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’

“ Accept, then, brethren, this season of natural sorrow as God intended it to be accepted; improve it as God intended it to be improved; look back upon the virtues of the deceased, that you may copy them into your own lives; be tender to the frailties

over which the pall of death is now flung, and in which all that is human more or less partakes; and go forth from this place of tombs to the legitimate and prescribed engagements of your life, more fitted to sustain them as Christian men, knowing that the time cometh when others are to grieve for you, and the deeds done upon the earth shall enter into the records of eternity!

“May God grant us mercy in that day, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.”

Again, at the funeral of an old almshouse-woman:

“Christian Friends,—We have followed to their last resting-place the mortal remains of an ancient and respected member of our religious society. And we are doing so under circumstances less painful and trying than those which surround us on many occasions of discharging the last sad offices due to the departed.

“It was but a little season since that I stood in this place to consign to their early tomb two sweet little babes, removed from the embrace of their earthly parents into the region where innocence, if lost to earth, is sure to be received to a home in heaven. It was the only, yet sufficient consolation, that so their Heavenly Father willed it. Hard to bear, and bitter bereavement, where faith is wanting to reconcile the heart to the mysterious arrangements of Him who gave and who taketh away! And even under the fullest influence of religious trust, under the largest exercise of Christian hope, leaving behind a scar upon the heart and a rent in the human affections, which haply may last even for the full term of a life, and will call up depressing recollections which a parent's love can never quite dismiss, and the happiest worldly lot will never quite exclude.

“We are met to-day under the influence of other thoughts. The days of man are ‘three-score years and ten.’ And there seems to be experienced that natural limit of our course on earth when we gather round the tomb of an honoured companion and friend, who, if called from a place long filled in our reverence and affection, yet leaves us as a guest whom it would fatigue and pain to tarry longer, and who retires to a timely and needed rest, to meet us repaired and invigorated on another day.

“In each and either case a lesson may surely be designed, which it may be well to take to heart. In the former case we have described, the prayer of faith and trust will best be expressed in the words, ‘Thy will, O God, be done—not mine!’ In the latter, ‘May it be given to us to die the death of the righteous, and may our end be like unto theirs!’

“It is our consoling privilege to believe, that the departed friend whose removal has summoned you, her associates and neighbours, to this place to-day, was one on whom we can look back with feelings of respectful as well as affectionate regret. By those who have known her well and observed her long, it has been related to me, that in the humble sphere which Providence assigned her, she fulfilled the circle of her duties as became a Christian woman. What greater praise could fall upon a royal bier? And in the levelling presence of death, what eloquence of worldly title could transcend or equal the praise and honour of her who did well as a peaceful neighbour, a kind friend and a most devoted mother? It was in the affectionate offices of an anxious parent (I have been given to understand), and when ministering to the wants of a daughter whose call was ever to her a command, that her feeble health experienced its last shock; and that summons which was to call her into another presence, met her in the exercise of the pious and gentle duties of an humble home. May we all, Christian friends, who are yet spared, be found in our day alike faithful! May the example of the departed, in whatever sphere we have known them, and whom perhaps while still among us we did not always honour as we might, not be lost to us beyond the grave! May a portion of its influence remain with us; that that which was wrong of it may be avoided; that that which was imperfect and wanting in it, may in us be filled up; and that that which was virtuous and venerable and good, may still live with us to inspire our best resolutions, and strengthen us to walk in the way that leadeth out of this life of trial and tears to ‘an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away,’ through faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . Amen.”

And in the closer intimacy of private correspondence, when

death casts its shadows on the homes and hearts of any of his friends, what sweet words of sympathy he always had, especially for female hearts!

"My dear Mrs. L——," he writes to a lady of his congregation who had lost a dear child of seven years of age, "will not doubt the deep concern I have felt and feel at the bitter sorrow that has befallen her and her afflicted husband. But could I have been unmoved on hearing of such a grief, your few natural and affectionate words, so calm and yet so fervent, addressed to Mrs. Armstrong, about your darling, and that sweet offering it contained, would have melted a harder nature than mine.

"I cannot trust myself with many words; but, were I able, would mingle sighs and prayers with you at your side. I am not at all well to-day, and was poorly most of last week, though fortunately able to be out yesterday, and to relieve Mr. James from some of his heavily pressing duties at this trying time.

"I wish my pen could interpret my thoughts—that it could say what love I have for little children, and what true sympathy I have in the passing sorrow of those who are called to surrender them even to a brighter home and more perfect happiness. Yet in that word 'passing' there is another sense with which your beautiful note has comforted me and my wife, as it had comforted you in giving expression to it. For this sorrow of yours, though surpassing now, will by and by be a passing one, leaving its 'peaceable fruits,' when you will be able to speak of your little N—— with composure, and to resume your wonted cheerfulness again; for so it pleaseth the Father to give his beloved rest. May this rest come as soon as it ought, and remain with you ever! With Christian regard and love,—thanking you for the sweet expressions of your note, which we almost regard as a message from your little one,—and with earnest prayer for yourself and your husband, I am," &c.

And to a lady recently left a widow, he writes, just a year before he himself was called away:

"My dear Mrs. H——, I know it does not require me to assure you how present to my mind, and my heart too, you have

been all these weeks, since your deep sorrow fell upon you. You have been a sermon to me. I have followed you in your happy life, in your domestic peace, in your unbroken love. I have remembered you as one of the happiest of married women, as enjoying God's choicest gift on earth, the companionship of a beloved, revered and trusted friend, the sharer with you, for better for worse, in all life's trials and experiences, heart of your heart, and, next after God and his Christ, soul of your soul. I have seen and followed you in all this joy and earthly blessedness;—the more joyful and blessed because you accepted and used this so great gift of God as a Christian woman, and as one, therefore, who in the dear gift would only the more strongly love and lean on the benignant Giver.

“And so knowing, trusting and loving Him, you would know and remember, too, that while in one sense a Giver, he was in another and more important sense only a Lender; inso-much that, like other treasures of God, and like, too, your own life and the life bound up with yours, you would feel that you carried it in an earthen vessel, liable at any moment to be broken, and for all earthly and natural uses to be accounted of as nought; yet all the more rooted and grounded in the precious belief that the treasure so lent, because so piously used, would be restored, renewed and glorified, no more to be broken, lost or changed, except from glory to glory, in the kingdom and presence of God for ever!

“This is the sermon you have been preaching to me. And this is the present peace and lively hope which I know, through grace, have been given you. Yes! all the piety of your life,—that piety which your Christian husband helped you to nourish and strengthen,—all your holy thoughts, and daily readings, and written reflections, gathered up into one mass of active and enduring faith, whereby, in your hour and season of natural suffering (deep and poignant though it was and is), you ‘have been more than conqueror, through him who loved you.’

“Such, I know, dear afflicted friend, have been and are your Christian experiences. And must we not thank God on our

own behalf, as well as on yours, that it is so? For again I say, it has been given to you and to us that you should be our living sermon, adorning the profession whereunto you are called, and adding one more testimony in the church of God to the light and power of the simple faith as you hold it to be in Jesus. What a happiness and a privilege to your living husband to have helped you to form and maintain this faith; and what added joy and glory to him now, if it be given him to know that his and your united labour in Christ has not been in vain!

"I have just written a few lines to our dear friend Mr. W——, directing to him at Kenilworth. We were greatly shocked indeed (for our natural feeling recoils from the thought of danger to our friends) to hear of his sudden and severe illness, and are most anxious to hear a confirmation of the improved accounts which have since reached us.

"Pray do not task yourself to write, but say to any of your circle who would kindly take that trouble, how much it would gratify us to know all particulars about him and you, and where you are going, and what you are all intending to do.

"I have been of late a severe sufferer myself, weakened beyond all belief by my miserable fortnight at Tenby, and only now recovering my usual strength and spirits.

"That lovely fortnight of summer glory, lighting up earth and sky with all the enchantment of tropical colour and brilliancy (not forgetting the quiet and comfort of our pleasant home), wonderfully wrought in my favour; and just as I had become well enough to avail myself of the welcome advice of my doctor to ride on horseback every day, a most unpicturesque change has come over the scene, and two days out of ten have been the extent of my opportunities to apply that agreeable and so far very successful treatment.

"To-day as sour and damp and drizzling as any of its forerunners. On Saturday I was beginning to rejoice with the farmers; but the poor wheat, whether standing or cut, is looking again as dismal as ever. But, by and by, please God, in this as in deeper matters, all will be bright and well, and we shall go forth, bringing our sheaves with joy!



"God bless and continually comfort you, dear friend, and ever believe both me and my wife, truly yours, G. A."

How carefully he watched over his flock, admonishing the wavering, advising the tempted and exhorting the faithful, will be seen by such letters as those which follow.

A friendly remonstrance to a seceder :

"My dear Sir,—A man who has to write as much every week as the most busied of your own clerks, and to be from home a good deal besides, may fairly claim indulgence for any want of promptitude in replying to the favours of his correspondents.

"In reference to yours, already three weeks unanswered, I have the less need perhaps to apologize, as its subject-matter is one which did not call for very urgent haste in undertaking explanation or reply.

"Do not be alarmed at my now making up for lost time by troubling you with my observations at some even inconvenient length. I like the frankness of your letter to me; and encouraged as well by this as the uniform friendly bearing of your manner, shall endeavour with equal frankness of expression and friendliness of feeling to convey to you my sentiments on a subject to my own mind of the deepest interest, and one deserving from you, as an intelligent and conscientious man, very serious contemplation, and, permit me to say, a no less earnest self-examination.

"Having taken some pains and undergone some struggles,—having, indeed, on very frequent occasions, still some personal discomforts peculiar to my position, to remind me of the earnestness, because the cost, of the efforts I have withal most willingly expended in pursuit and for the sake of truth, I may perhaps be allowed to express with a somewhat corresponding measure of earnestness my concern and surprise that a mature and educated mind could so slightly value that which it had been once its fortune to possess without struggle, and on further reflection to see so little in that which to my own mind is all in all.

"Without descending to definitions which needlessly prolong a discussion, I am to presume that, until within a some recent

period, you have been of Unitarian sentiments. It appears that you have now relaxed in, if not altogether abandoned, your belief in that form of revealed truth, although in the terms by which you convey this impression to me there is so much of vagueness that I hardly know how to collect to what extent your change of opinion may have gone, and as little can be sure of its direction. Yet I do not misinterpret you in supposing that it is such as to preclude your use of the word 'revealed' as applicable to the religious opinions you now hold.

"You certainly give yourself ample room and verge enough in which to institute a search for truth. Supposing the chance of finding it sufficient to warrant any search at all about it, 'it would be found,' you think, 'to lie between nearly all the religious parties of the earth.' I must own to you, I should feel quite as much reluctance as I fancy you would yourself, to set out on so very uncertain a voyage of discovery. It reminds me of a saying we used to have at school, when on inquiring where such a person was, the answer would be, 'Between the sky and the ground.' Now I think we might usefully narrow the limits within which to pursue our search. And presuming you will have no objection to lay aside the fire-worship of Persia, the idolatries of India and the fetichism of Africa, our latitude of choice might then be confined to the scepticism of Hume, the Romanism of Bossuet, the orthodoxy of Cranmer, or the beautiful and, as I deem them, Christian sentimentalities of Channing.

"With the first, I am really doubtful how far you may be in sympathy. He had a notion, in which you seem to concur, that men had no grounds of belief in anything; while, again, in the statement 'that there is no denomination of Christians whose tenets exactly agree with your own,' an implication is conveyed that the opinions you hold, although peculiar, are yet Christian, and founded, therefore, on a judgment formed as to the meaning of the sacred records. If this be the fact, then our circle is reduced to the ground which has been occupied by Christian theologians only, and the conclusion is indicated that with none of them can you exactly concur. In this predicament it turns

out, after all, that you and I are pretty nearly alike involved. There is no class of Christians, so far as they are capable of being classified, with whom I in all points find myself one in opinion. But what then? Am I to abandon myself to isolation, and deny myself the comfort and edification of testifying my support of those, and gathering from them support in return, who most nearly approach my own conceptions of truth, and especially who embrace in their institutions a spirit of freedom and independence of secular or spiritual control, conducive more than all human means to the ultimate elimination of truth, so far as it can be attained in our present state of being? Assuredly not; at least so I answer for myself, and so, I believe, I am correctly suggesting to you.

“To whom, then, may I ask, do you most nearly approximate? You speak in reprobation or despair of any exact logical definition of the nature and being of the Deity or of the Saviour. But I entreat you to reflect on whom or what church does that censure most fittingly rest.

“On those who content themselves, and ask their contemporaries to be contented, with the declaration that ‘there is but *one* God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ;’ or those who, on pain of exclusion from the charities and courtesies of life (and this I know, for I experience it) and predicted exclusion from the mercies of Heaven, declare, by the most ‘exact definitions’ (not ‘*logical*’ indeed), that there is ‘one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;’ the Father being made of none, neither created nor begotten; the Son not made nor created, but begotten; and the Holy Ghost neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding?’ For my own part, I have only to say, if any clear ideas, conceivable by the mind or improving to the heart, can be extricated from these words, most welcome to the advantage are all those who can derive from them so valuable an edification. But if they be really beyond comprehension,—if, in point of fact, they be as little appropriate to the satisfaction of the intellect and the sanctification and comfort of man’s suffering and sinning life, as if he had been told that ‘all the voices of the celestial joyfulness qualify, commix and harmonize in the fire

which was from eternity in the good quality,' or that a 'chimera buzzing in a vacuum had the power of eating up second intentions,'—then I incline to think that the inventors, the patrons and the listeners to such language, and not to those who believe that there is 'ONE GOD and his name *One*, and that Jesus is THE CHRIST whom He hath sanctified and sent into the world,' attaches the blame of '*attempting impracticable definitions*,' with the awful responsibility besides of declaring that all who reject them must 'without doubt everlastingly perish.'

"Indeed, my good friend, this is a matter well worthy of your serious and manly reflection. I adjure you to bring to it the best powers of your instructed mind, and the prayerful application of an honest and upright heart. Let nothing come between you and the awful presence of a heart-seeing and truth-loving God.

"If I have ever mis-stated or over-stated the shocking errors conceived in the darkness of long past ages, and kept in countenance by the wealth, the power and ecclesiastical learning of successive ages since, but from which, I bless my free lot, my soul has indignantly fled;—if I have been guilty of this wrong to you or others, forgive me, I pray you, this wrong, and ask for the perusal of any discourse in which occasion of complaint may have been given, that I may yet have the satisfaction of explaining or withdrawing the noxious matter, and removing one stumbling-block in the way of your restoration to a sympathy and a share in those religious services which it has ever been my purpose to conduct in the love of man, the fear of God, and faithful adherence to his word and truth as made known to the world by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"I know the temptations of family convenience, and, were anything less at stake, would honour and love the concessions which married affection is so prone to yield. But remember the passage in Matthew xix. 29; and permit me, with unaffected regard for your best happiness even now, to suggest for mutual reflection in the home so deeply dear to you, that a respect and delicacy for the religious impressions of each equally, and the desire on both sides that they should be conscientiously carried

out, would at once be the highest test of married love, and the guarantee that, each being meekly faithful to their God, the tie of their earthly connection would be proportionally strengthened, refined and preserved. In conclusion, permit me to ask the favour of your perusal of my sermon on the occasion referred to in my last. I hope you will acknowledge that I have not made it unduly secular, and that your taste would not have been offended had you been among my hearers when it was delivered.

"I must now release both myself and you, remaining," &c.

To a member of his congregation removing to a place where there was no Unitarian church :

"December 5th, 1853.

"I write this for your worthy husband as well as for yourself; and with him you will take counsel in a spirit of kindness towards me, but of solemn earnestness in your own hearts, in regard to the subject of which I am about to speak.

"I felt strongly interested in what you mentioned last evening of your intentions, on your removal from Bristol, respecting the religious arrangements for yourselves and your youthful family. You have felt, I doubt not, what a high responsibility is involved in this matter. You have yourselves made sacrifices for the sake of conscience, which testify the value you set upon the exercise of a worship in harmony with your sentiments, and the importance you attach to the bearing of *open and consistent witness to the truth* which God in his goodness has brought home to your hearts as well as understandings.

"And now, dear friends, for the application of these facts under your present circumstances.

"You regret the want of a Unitarian church at Newport; and you suggested, I thought most properly, that 'you would be obliged to have a church *at home*;' adding, however, with no very apparent consistency, that you 'must take your children to public worship.' May I ask, why? And does the previous question not impress itself,—What kind of public worship? Is this a matter of indifference? or is public worship, of and for itself, the thing to be desired? If so, would you habitually take your children to a Romish chapel, or to a Calvinistic Methodist chapel?

It is curious that Unitarians only are so accommodating in their religious compliances. Who ever hears of a Church-of-England person, a Romanist or a Methodist, habitually going to Unitarian worship? And yet there, while they could hear nothing very offensive in a devotion framed upon the Lord's Prayer, they would never hear anything at variance with the largest charity; Unitarians, on the contrary, frequenting the Church, being not only committed to the worship of a *slain God*, but to the awful denunciation periodically pronounced upon themselves in its most distinctive profession of faith.

"Do you remember, dear Madam, that sentence in my recent lecture, expressive of astonishment how any who believe that 'God is A SPIRIT,' can, *without trembling*, set at nought the instructions of the Saviour, and worship a *substantial man* who died upon a cross! Can a Unitarian in that act, real or seeming, be 'worshipping in spirit and in truth'? Can we expect Unitarianism to have power over its opponents, when we see it, under such circumstances, have so little influence over its adherents?

"Public worship, you say, is important for your children; and you are right, when it can be had consistently and without a violation of higher principles. On any other terms (as it would be in you, by seeming conformity to the services of the Church of England), such an exercise must be liable to the imputation of superstition or secularity: the former, if importance is attached to the merely external observance; the latter, if the practice be in any measure suggested by a desire to stand well with the world and to have the praise of men rather than the praise of God. It is just possible to contend that, on the whole, more good is gained than evil incurred by attendance on Church worship under the circumstances in question. I confess I cannot think so. Two facts alone ought to disabuse a Unitarian mind of such a thought,—the Litany and the Athanasian Creed; the former inexpressibly wounding by its anti-scriptural and revolting phraseology and form of thought, which are wholly Romish and worse than heathenish; the latter, by its merciless arrogance, unfitting the Church which adopts it for any really exalting influences. Her want of truth is bad; but even if such a Church

had it, her want of charity is worse, and would make the former no better than 'sounding brass or tinkling cymbal.'

"Then what alternative for you remains? Perhaps a compromise to the following effect. On Sabbath-days, worship at home in the morning, and attend, if you please, the afternoon service of the Church. You would thus be bearing your testimony against the Litany, while you would take care never to be within hearing of the curses of the Athanasian Creed. You would be shewing your dear children the reasons why you abstained from morning attendance and the scriptural value of those reasons; and you would be saving them from that influence which would otherwise grow with their growth, and be sure, in despite of all counter influences from you, to gather them into the bosom of the Church established by law, there to remain and occasionally assist in those pious exercises which would doom their heretical parents to the worst penalties of the worst sin. You would be securing the benefits (whatever they might be) of public worship in the church in one part of the day; and in the other, might hope to be blessed in your family worship at home with the realization of that promise of the Master, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them.'

"And now may God bless you, your husband and your children! May He go with you where you go, dwell with you where you dwell, and finally conduct you to be for ever with Himself, through his infinite mercy in Jesus Christ! is the prayer of one who will always be your friend, though so soon no longer to be your pastor,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

To a young friend at Rugby school who had written to him for advice as to the conduct of his religious life among companions and amid influences so opposed to the views he had been taught of Christian truth and duty, he writes:

"Oct. 23, 1844.

"Pray attribute to many engagements, and not to any forgetfulness of you, my tardiness of reply to your interesting letter, which I duly received. To a like cause I must ask you to attri-

bute brevity and haste in my present attempt to satisfy some of your inquiries therein referred to.

“‘The wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove’—what Cicero has called the ‘*mitis sapientiæ*,’ ‘meekness of wisdom,’ as we phrase it in English—this must be your aim, and subject too, my dear young friend, of prayer. For without this, depend upon it, the world in one or other of its influences (and nowhere more than at school do they exercise their sway) will prove too much for you.

“Suavity of manner with firmness of principle—let this be your method of dealing with the uninstructed and the prejudiced whenever you meet them, and conform to nothing of which your judgment and inward feeling do not entirely approve. The *bowing* referred to I have myself no great objection to, though founded on a mistaken translation of the passage in Philippians, where it should be ‘*in*,’ not ‘*at* the name of Jesus,’ &c., ‘*ἐν*.’ So Archbishop Secker and others translate the word. But, truly, I so deeply feel the peculiar goodness of God in sending Jesus to enlighten and sanctify and comfort us, that I cannot refuse with any strong disinclination to join in the outward recognition of my unbounded sense of the blessing he has brought to my heart and the hope he has given to my soul. On the whole, I should rather abstain from bowing, lest others should misunderstand you, and take that for worship which you only mean for reverence.

“When you have opportunity, solicit those who are Unitarians to converse with you, and especially to consider whether the service of the lip demanded from you in the Litany, is such as you or they can render from the mind and heart. God cannot suffer. The first Article of the Church of England defines Him to be a Being ‘without body, parts or passions;’ and Jesus says, ‘God is a Spirit’—you know the rest of the passage.

“May Heaven preserve your young heart from contamination! and may you be kept by the power of God unto salvation! is the sincere prayer of your friend,

“G. A.

“P.S. I have been reading the Quarterly Review of Stanley’s



Life of Dr. Arnold with great pleasure. How unaccountable it was that such a man could reconcile himself to the shackles of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles!

“On running my eye over this too hasty reply to yours, I feel that I have been wrong in helping to countenance a practice (that of bowing) which others would undoubtedly understand in a wrong sense, and which, it is much to be feared, would have a tendency to *facilitate unworthy conformity* and *self-deceptive excuses* in other matters of religion, in which, above all things, the conscience should be kept unsullied.”

## CHAPTER III.

### SOCIAL LIFE. VIEWS OF NATURE AND ART.

SOMEBODY said of Dr. Priestley that they loved him because he was like a piece of crystal, "you could take him up and look through him." Mr. Armstrong was of a like transparency; he shewed his heart upon the surface of all he said and did. Sympathizing acutely with his fellow-creatures, appreciating warmly all that was true and beautiful and good in life, with a total absence of self-consciousness, he threw a charm around his social intercourse, which all who knew him recollect with sorrow that it is no longer their privilege to share his conversation and his thoughts. But happily, his large heart did not exhaust the innocent joys this much-abused world so readily afforded him in merely spoken words of gratitude and praise. There are some interesting records in his later journals of his unobtrusive existence, a few extracts from which will admit even the stranger within the sanctuary of his soul, and shew how undimmed and fresh his spirit was in spite of bodily suffering and increasing years.

Of the visits he paid and journeys he went on duty and on pleasure, he made so many little histories which exhibit his warm and generous nature to great advantage. The ordinary domestic life of our English homes, the familiar and often neglected scenery of our native land, seen through the pleasant descriptions he has left us, reveal a poetry and a reality which escape observers less delicately organized. His heart and mind were like an

æolian harp, which changes the common and untuned winds of heaven to "a concord of sweet sounds."

He was very fond of natural scenery, of all rural objects, and particularly of flowers. He made a memorandum of the state of the weather every day, noted the variations of light and shade upon the view from his windows, and so delighted in fresh air and exercise, that it was difficult to keep him within doors, even when his medical adviser had ordered his confinement to the house. This love of nature shines through all he writes, and, under the influence of his ready pen, we can picture the landscapes that he loved, hear the songs of the birds whose notes he knew so well, the wind rustling in the trees, under whose shade he describes himself as so often sitting, and see the sheep whose tranquil happiness he sometimes almost envied. And with the external aspects of the scenes he so well describes, he speaks of the emotions they excited in his mind, and of his faith in the whisperings from heaven which they breathed. Without a belief in God, what were Nature in her sublimest or simplest beauty to the poor wanderer on her bosom? A desert without interest and without meaning. But man is permitted to interpret her language. He knows that God has prepared the earth for his dwelling-place, and filled it with beauties for his admiration and delight. The azure sky, the fleeting clouds, the rippling brooks, the sunlit fields, the shaded solitudes of the woods,—in all this divine symbolism, he whose soul is unperverted sees and hears and feels the presence of his Maker. "I walked on the Down after service," he writes on the 6th of June, 1852, "and, in my enchantment at the view, expressed my feelings to a stranger, a gentleman who seemed equally impressed with the beauty of the scene. I was just in my own mind, and almost with audible articulation, saying, 'Thank God for this!' when on my remarking to the gentleman, who was standing a few paces off, the extraordinary beauty that reigned around, he earnestly assented, using the very words I had all but spoken, 'Thank God!' 'The very sentiment, Sir, I had just been feeling in my own heart; truly we may say, Thank God!' We mutually bowed, and so separated. It was curious and interesting surely, and not a little

so that, in harmony with this agreeable little incident, I presently sat down on a rock to read a sonnet of Sir Thomas Hanmer, perfectly appropriate to the scene, which Mr. C. J. Thomas had that morning handed to me in manuscript, kindly and rightly thinking I should like and admire it."

His love of art, too, was alike ardent and discriminating; and scattered among the extracts from his journals and letters which will follow in this chapter, there will be found some interesting observations on this department of the "ministry of the Beautiful," impressed with the same colouring of cultivated taste and the same associations of religious hope.

The following is a letter to his daughter, eminently descriptive of the writer in that phase of his character which we have been considering:

"At an inn, within the demesne at Chatsworth,  
Wednesday night, Sept. 25, 1844.

"Thus particular am I in dating and describing, lest the effect of my recent experience of all that is transporting to human eye should render it necessary to my family to send in search of whatever there may remain of me, after the delicious but exhausting agitation I have been undergoing!

"When I was last heard of by you, dear Janey, I suppose I was at my comparatively quiet home at Clifton. But duty, with rare felicity of concurrence, combining with pleasure, having taken me into this neighbourhood, before unknown to me, I thought it might amuse you to learn what I was about, and if I succeed in telling you anything worth sending further on, or rather partly backward on its journey, you will please to let my faithful spouse have it as soon as post can take it to her after you have read it.

"At Mrs. Morgan's, Parkfield,  
Monday night, Sept. 30.

"You see, dear Janey, I have given myself time enough to recover from my transports ere I resumed my pen to go over in description the journey I have been making, and in the midst of which I found myself when I last sat down to address you.

"I was then unable to pursue my purpose, being tempted to

return to some of the scenes I had visited in the day, and see how Chatsworth Palace would look by the brilliant moonlight which was then all eloquently peeping through my parlour window. So out I sallied, and out I stayed till near eleven, and got my feet so thoroughly wet with the dew that I thought it better at once to unmake my toilet and go to bed. This I did, and from that moment to this have never had a leisure half-hour to return to my letter.

“Having reached Birmingham at a comfortable hour in the evening for tea on Friday, I thought I had better make further inquiry about the hotel at the railway station at this place, of which I had some rather favourable impression from a former hasty inspection. It proved a discovery worth the making. If you or your friends should ever have occasion to pay for entertainment in or near Birmingham, go by all means to the Queen’s Hotel.

“Next morning, I had nothing to do but pay my bill and step out of the coffee-room into my travelling carriage; and, after passing through a flat but agreeable country, found myself at Leicester about three in the afternoon. A fly was presently at hand to take me to mine host Mr. Berry’s very nice little manse about a mile from the town. There I found himself, his wife, and two fine little girls, his grandchildren.

“I should say that on my way to Leicester, the train arrangements admitting of a delay at Rugby, I remained there for an hour and a half, which I employed in examining the school premises and the chapel thereof, in which Dr. Arnold used to preach to the naughty schoolboys, and in which, together with those of several deceased predecessors, his interesting monument now is.

“To return to Leicester;—an agreeable tête-a-tête after dinner with Mr. Berry, who is a very accomplished and worthy man.

“In due time I was permitted to occupy the library solus, with every requisite comfort and convenience for reading, writing and meditating. The opportunity was not lost on me; for I set to writing five or six sheets of addition to the sermon I was to preach in the morning. My thoughts were in fine flow, for I think these pages formed the best part of my harangue. By

the by, I had walked with Mr. Berry before tea to visit the chapel, a neat old building of 1708, and take note of any needed adjustments of the pulpit; on our way not forgetting to inspect some wonderfully perfect remains of an old Roman building in the town, once of so great extent as to afford materials for the erection of the oldest and one of the largest churches in Leicester. Next in size, and superior to it in dignity and appearance, is the church of St. Mary's, of Norman celebrity, very old of course, and full of architectural details of rare value and interest. And who do you think is the rector? Why no other than my old friend, college contemporary and Lyons connection, John B——, of Belfast, and till lately of Aberdeen! A Liberal in politics, and, if he could be, in theology, he is on a fair footing with the Dissenting community, and in particular with Mr. Berry, with whom he had more than once been speaking of me.

"Well, Sunday morning has come. Has Mr. Berry a gown? No; never uses one. Indeed; what then can be done? Have we no resource? Rather than appear without one, let me write a note to B——. The note was written, explaining the how and the why, and was taken to his house; but Mr. Berry, fearing it might not find him there, took the resolution of proceeding direct to his church, where he found Mr. B—— already robed, and just stepping out of his vestry-room to commence service. The case was explained. Was there a gown to be had? 'I fear not; I cannot spare my own; but let me see; yes, I think there may be a spare one—but will it do? It is old; here it is,'—opening a press where there were several, and producing one nearly as good as new. It was his curate's, who was absent on other duty. And so the gown was got, Mr. Berry's messenger being in attendance, and speedily it adorned the person of your worthy sire.

"Morning and evening I preached to full and very attentive congregations, taking advantage of the acceptance with which I seemed to be favoured to entreat the good people to do what they had never done before,—*stand up at the singing*; and which I since learn (with many thanks to me) they mean to continue as their practice from henceforth.

“On returning to the manse, we had supper of course ; and, oh Janey ! such singing of sacred music by Mr. Berry, his daughter, who had returned home before morning service, a very nice girl, and a young man of the congregation, one of their choir. Haydn’s Latin masses and other compositions, all sung with exquisite taste and talent by these three. How I was wishing for you to enjoy it with me ! ‘ If we believe that Jesus died,’ &c. (from Thessalonians), an anthem by Boyce, was divine.

“ Monday was wet and dreary, and I could see nothing till about three o’clock, when I walked into the town ; there meeting B——, whom we had intended calling on. He proposed calling on me next morning, which he did.

“ We were now to proceed into the country to dinner, at the residence of Mr. Berry’s brother-in-law, a Mr. B——, who possesses a delightful house and ample pleasure-grounds about two miles from Leicester. Mr. B—— is a scholar as well as manufacturer, and is quite a master in the classics as well as all sorts of Italian and German literature. We were received in his library, which it was a privilege to *look* at, even without touching a book.

“ After tea, we had *such* enjoyment in looking over the coloured engravings of ‘ Audubon’s American Birds,’ a work in four volumes, treble folio size, one volume alone having to be supported by two persons when placing it on the table ; the mere binding (scarlet morocco) being of imperial magnificence. Audubon, though an American, had to publish this costly work in London. Nothing in the world perhaps, except the present Lord Kingston’s Mexico, was ever so expensively or with such artistical perfection given from the press.

“ We were delighted, too, with the garrulous pleasantry of a little old bachelor, full of fun, good-nature, good memory and musical enthusiasm, a Mr. ——, well known as a musical composer. The things he said to me in compliment were more than I could venture even to tell, much less to write, to you. But to his charmed vision, everything is ‘ *couleur de rose*.’

“ Next morning, off for Derby, Matlock, and the sweetest little place in the world, between the latter and Chatsworth,

called Rowsley, of which presently. Before leaving, B—— came to pay his visit to me. Having packed, I was able to chat with him for near an hour about old times and old friends in Belfast, where I had last seen him when I went to preach there. And now arrived my fly to take me to the station, Mr. Berry having been obliged by business to go into Leicester, but promising to meet me at that point. Haste was needful; Mr. B—— was to come part of the way with me. I sprang to the parlour door to gather up my traps in the hall, when lo! the door would not open; I tried coaxing, then forcing; B—— tried; I tried again; all in vain; and the servant outside the same. With the practical philosophy which always serves me in emergencies, I proceeded to the window. There was a strong wire fence without, but *fast*. Yet room seemed to be left for escape for a person of moderate dimensions between the window-frame and the wire. My resolution was taken. ‘B——, my friend, it is unlucky to be large. *You are pinned!* I am not, so good-bye.’ At this instant, the refractory bolt of the door, by the effort of the maid, was brought into its proper place, and we both were liberated. But to this moment, the preposterous predicament in which B—— stood, when I was bidding him good-bye, telling him he was ‘pinned,’ moves me to irrepressible laughter.

“Well, I am now on the road to Derby; during my progress to which I was incessantly musing on, and inwardly humming, ‘As I was going to Derby,’ &c. I was not, however, shut up in a black hole, but conducted through a most delicious country. On emerging from my carriage at the station for Matlock, I just had time to recognize and interchange salutations with Mr. Leonard Horner, the biographer of his brother, whom I last met at Kilsharvan, and who was now on his way to York, to the British Association. On I went, by side of the driver of an omnibus in waiting to take me and another touring party to Matlock. The drive from Ambergate, by Sir Richard Arkwright’s (the stocking-maker, and the richest man in England), to Matlock, more varied and bold, but not so extensive, being very much like a considerable part of that lovely drive between Exeter and Tiverton. The limestone rocks of Derbyshire here begin to



shew their beauty. But at Matlock they become only *not* sublime from the enchanting veil thrown over them by the hanging woods and clinging creepers, which render the whole scene beyond measure captivating wherever the eye can rest. We were taken to the chief inn, kept by a former housekeeper of the Duke of Devonshire, to whom I committed the important task of providing me such dinner as she thought fit, and having inspected the spar museum, wended my way up one of the wooded hills, passing by and saluting the party who had come with me in the omnibus. An hour was spent in this exercise and in examining some caves; and, with an appetite admirably whetted, I returned to my little parlour, all so snug, to sit down to a dinner such as the *Vèrys*, of the Palais Royal, might have been envious of. In the course of not many minutes, again on top of a nice coach, through Darley Dale (it ought to be called darling Dale), by the Derwent, on to Rowsley, half way to Chatsworth; and there I stopped, and could have stopped for ever, had I nowhere else to go, or nothing else to do. In a walk at Ashton the week before, Miss J—— V—— had been describing this inn, for the hamlet was hardly anything more, as singularly inviting, and its neighbourhood as delightful, advising me by all means to visit it, and tell the landlady, Mrs. Severn (a good Unitarian), that she had sent me. I took her advice and followed her directions, and never shall I live to regret it. Nothing that Thompson and Milton, or any child of English poesy, could write, could do justice to the varied loveliness of this exquisitely English spot, from whose slopes and meadows could be descried every feature that can render landscape scenery bewitching.

“ Having chatted with Mrs. Severn, and ordered my tea for nine o'clock, off I wandered, under a sky glorious with the traces of an autumnal sun but just gone down, and now yielding to the lovelier radiance, if possible, of a full-orbed moon. I got into some fields washed by the Wye (a small river), which here hastens to join the Derwent, and, keeping both rivers in sight, ascended a hill which gave me a view of similar enchantments for miles upon miles around. In any other place, the abundance of hares and the whirring of partridges which got up at my

feet would have interested me. But here it was impossible to mind anything but the views. It was now fairly night; and descending on another side, I presently got to my inn, to subside and think, and take my tea and buttered toast (for if we did not eat we should be lost!). Nothing particular occurred till morning, unless a particularly good sleep in a dear little room, which looks into a little paradise of a garden.

“A fog which prevailed in the early part of next morning not dispersing until eight, I could not get out before that hour. It was then just such a morning as the astronomer in *Rasselas* would have manufactured, supposing him to be at Rowsley in search of the picturesque. I dressed with my window wide open, the blind half down, to keep the precious sun out of my eyes. Everything so green, so clear and so sweet, including under this last description the melody of waters rolling over a rugged channel and under a bridge obliquely presenting itself just beyond the garden, so as to shew the arches to the best effect; an orchard next beyond that, then a farm-house, and, further still, a waving line of wooded hills. And now for a surprise. Brimming with admiration at all this, yet, as if the cup of enjoyment were not *quite* full, presently saluted my ears sweet sounds of voices; nearer and nearer they came,—it was Rousseau’s *Dream*, sung in parts! What next? A two-horsed waggon passing over the bridge, laden with peasant boys and girls, dressed out in their best, and beautiful to look at. These happy young people carolling thus, as they proceeded to a neighbouring church, where the Bishop was to hold a confirmation, and transfer to their own keeping the promises and vows hitherto, no doubt, religiously kept for them by their godfathers and godmothers. Many more such waggon-loads passed afterwards, but none so chorally inclined as the first. Was not this a lucky little incident? Never sure did music sound in such perfection before.

“I could not breakfast till I had once more ascended the hill to have a morning view of the landscapes I had only obscurely seen the evening before. My difficulty was *where* to fix my eyes, or, having fixed them, *when* to turn them to other objects.

Everything was in a conspiracy to charm me out of my senses. Yet I *did* preserve them; I *did*! One new feature, though very old object, presented itself. It was Haddon Hall, a baronial castle of the Rutland Dukes, partly built at the time of the Conquest, and completed in the reign of Elizabeth. It is a Castle built on an elevated bank of the Wye, surrounded by noble woods, and now shewn to many hundreds during every summer as the most perfect specimen extant of the aristocratic dwelling of the earliest English ages. There is no furniture in it, except a state bed in which old Elizabeth slept on coming down to open a ball there; but every room is perfect, above and below. But I am describing it in detail, instead of as seen at a distance of two miles, in the foreground of a view which, even without it, would have been one of the most perfect in the world.

“It was now necessary to turn to other thoughts and scenes. Breakfast was ready; and of a truth, by this time, so was I. It was speedily done; and then a walk to Haddon, now and again peeping down pretty roads and green lanes. I met a poor-looking countryman, and having my little book of Scripture texts in my hand, I read to him from Ps. lxxxv. 7, ‘Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.’ He was pleased and solemnized by my address; and heartily joined me in applying and reciprocating the aspiration these words conveyed. We agreed that this was a very pretty world, but that it was well to have a better in view; and so we parted, bidding each other God-speed! The man was in earnest, and in good sooth so was I.

“I then turned round to sketch an old remnant of an ash-tree growing out of a rock hard by the river side. What a wood-cut it would have made for some of Mary Howitt’s stories! But as I had only the edge of a newspaper and a blunt pencil to work with, I made but a poor hand of it. And now, Haddon Castle close to me, and Bakewell church in the distance and new reaches of the river. But I must get on, other folks are on the move, and so must I. Here comes a jaunting car, Dublin fashion, with a group of such fair creatures on it; but not Irish, as I

afterwards found by their speech when we were together wandering through the old rooms at Haddon.

“These having already endeavoured to describe, I must now go along the field banks of the river on the Castle side, and so back to my inn at Rowsley. Compliments as well as bill paid to mine Unitarian hostess, with thanks and greetings duly interchanged, I stepped into a phaeton provided by her, in which I was speedily wafted to the gates of princely Chatsworth. Here three hours were spent in exploring within and without as much as could be seen without a direct order from the Duke. So take note of this, ye would-be visitors of Chatsworth! But what three hours could have embraced more than fell within our astonished view during this memorable and all-lovely afternoon? I had companions,—not the fair occupants of the car, whom I left singing and laughing on the leads of Haddon Hall,—but a fat little cutler from Sheffield (for so I interpreted the man), and a gawky companion who certainly must have been the ninth part of a man, therefore a tailor; for he got so tired in the walks, and, in spite of his energetic little friend, *would* sit down in despair, while *we* ascended to the upper walks looking down upon the unparalleled combination of gardens, palace, lakes and lawns below! Nothing but the House of Commons can supply the comment—‘Oh, oh, oh!’

“Departing from the scene, our way was taken to the inn at Edenser, the Duke’s village, at the edge of the demesne, whither I had sent my luggage. As we walked along, said I to the cutler, ‘Here comes the Duke.’ ‘Where?’ said he. ‘On the pony before us,’ said I. ‘Nonsense,’ said he; ‘sure he would have a servant behind him.’ ‘No matter, the Duke it is, and you shall see me salute him.’ I did so; while the incredulous cutler stood aloof, wondering I should bow to so plain a looking personage. The tailor, half inclined to believe, at length united with me in declaring it must be the Duke; as in truth it was, and a very noble-looking Duke he is. The cutler looked puzzled, and finally resigning his scepticism, as soon as the Duke had passed, stood athwart the path with his hands in his breeches’-pockets, and never took eyes off the Duke’s *back*, so long as the

ducal back kept in view, as if resolved to make up for the incredulity which deprived him of the pleasure of exploring him in *front*! I know not whether the cutler's knife and fork at dinner felt the influence of the disappointment, for I asked for an apartment to myself, and cut the connection at the earliest possible opportunity.

"Dinner over, I sallied forth again to enjoy the scene by moonlight, hoping to see the reflection of the moon from the burnished window-frames of the noble building, especially on the Queen's façade, fronting the river. But all was mist; not a particle to be seen; and not till morning at seven o'clock could I get a second view of this 'Palace of the Peak.' It was a hasty one; for I had still to explore the village and look in upon the happy cottagers. Imagine some twenty or upwards of Swiss cottages, much like the Henbury ones, but slated and tiled in various beautiful forms, and you have the village, with a beautiful antique church at the end of it.

"Breakfast, gig to Baslow, coach to Bakewell, thence by Buxton, with all its rivered vales and rocks and woods, to smoky Stockport, populous Manchester, and bustling Liverpool, and so my rambling letter ends; for now I have arrived at Mr. Thom's beautiful villa three miles off; delighted to be introduced to his nice little wife and agreeably entertained by them and their guests, two Miss E——s, first-rate musicians, about whom and an artistical Italian who painted Channing from the living form, and an extraordinary backwoodsman (a Mr. F——), formerly of America, now of Stratford, and of the rest of my adventures, I may lawfully reserve myself for detail when 'we two shall meet again,' which I hope, dear Janey, may be very, very *soon*. And believe me ever your prosy but loving papa, "G. A."

From an account of a visit to York in July, 1851:

"After a comfortable night, not unpleasantly interrupted by the sounds of the old Minster clock, resolved to proceed before breakfast to the ten-o'clock cathedral service, which I accordingly did. The service was respectable, but the Minster itself—what language could describe? In one word, it left nothing to be

wished for; the length of the two aisles terminating at each end with such gorgeous windows, the height of the clustered columns supporting the vast arches of the nave, and the colour and form of the rose window adorning the south side of it,—what a crowd of delights to the eye and to the imagination? For one's thoughts in such a scene always go back—with me at least—to the ancient times, with all their strange institutions and habits, when these vast piles were in process of erection; and in looking back, somehow all the rough, uncouth, barbarous character of those days crumble away under the softening touch of time, and nothing but the good, the beautiful and the holy, stand out to challenge admiration, and make their corresponding impression, not only on the outward sense, but on the inmost heart. The most incomprehensible of all defects in the Dissenting mind is surely that which deprives it of the power of loving these things, and of appreciating their worth as means of attraction and attachment to religious observance and all its spiritual, refining influences.

“ But the charms of this delightful place are not easily or soon described. By far the most graceful, if not the most curious, of the objects which arrest the attention of the visitor are the glorious old remains of St. Mary's Abbey,—worthy of their position hard by the towers of the Minster, which are seen in exquisite combination with the ivy-covered remains, whose security and beauty are now so happily guarded by the liberal care of the Antiquarian Society. It was only necessary to see this architectural grouping under the favour of a sky which Italy might have envied, and to remember they were in great part enclosed by an ancient Roman wall, still within sight and touch, to give the crowning witchery to a scene perhaps the most beautiful and memorable, certainly among the most enjoyable, I have ever experienced. Nor ought I to be unmindful of my agreeable friends, Messrs. Palmer and Wreford, who kindly accompanied me to this classic and venerable spot, and who afterwards took me to see two objects of a very different, but not less interesting, character,—the little, old-fashioned, brick-built Unitarian chapel where Mr. Wellbeloved for so many years has ministered, and

one of whose chief distinctions is its possession of a vestry adorned with the original portraits of Sir John and Lady Hewley of liberal and Dissenting fame; and, subsequently, Mr. Wellbeloved himself, whom we found sitting in his nice cool, quiet, gentleman-like study, enjoying himself, as his manner is, in the perusal of some learned work. It was really a treat to see him, if my visit to York had been unattended by any other pleasure. Lastly, the courtesies and kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Kenrick were the graceful and appropriate finish of my very delightful sojourn in this old city."

A sketch on the banks of the Thames (October 2, 1851):

"Arrived at Reading, about half-past one, and there found that Sonning, whither I was bound, was upwards of three miles off, and much nearer to Twyford, the last station I had passed. Nothing daunted, however, leaving my luggage in charge at the office, off I set, in the face of a shower which waited on my footsteps most of the way, on what otherwise would have been a most delightful ramble. The whole way lay through a richly improved and fine agricultural district, till, within less than a mile of Sonning, it became more enclosed and overshadowed with noble timber. Here the rain was so heavy, I was obliged to take shelter in the back lodge of a gentleman's demesne; I found it was Sonning Park, the seat of Mr. Robert Palmer, M.P. for the county. The lodge was neatness and cleanliness itself; the old lady, wife of the lodge-keeper, the picture of English decency dependent upon the protection of aristocratic benevolence. She was kind, chatty, contented, and gave very pleasant accounts of the goodness of the ladies at the Hall, maiden sisters of the bachelor proprietor, who were ever ready at a sick call, and sure to help in every case where the needy were really unable to help themselves, but not otherwise. Having heard her out and the rain now ceasing, I bade good morning and trudged on, not having far to go ere I found myself at the village boundary. Hard by the park wall, a little to the right, some irregular cottages and picturesque gables, with windows opening on hinges, and bright as hands could make them, furnished with muslin

blinds and adorned with fuschias, scarlet geraniums, &c., announced to me that I was at the entrance to Sonning. Walking on a little, I asked for the post-office: it was close at hand. 'Pray which is the residence of Mr. E. F——? Perhaps you can inform me.' 'O yes; it is on the other side the bridge, among the first houses you come to. Your nearest way will be to turn back and pursue the park wall till you come to the churchyard; passing through which you will presently come to the bridge.' I followed my instructions, gathering increased delight at every step I took. The churchyard of Sonning, with its old village church and ivy-mantled tower, dividing the park from the village, taking all its accompaniments of antiquity, retirement, sloping grounds, stately timber and noble river, the Thames, quietly skirting it on one side, is certainly as picturesque as any to be found in England, or to be fancied by the most lively imagination. It was superlative.

"But where was the promised bridge? I was now past the churchyard, and could not see it; nevertheless, I was close by it; a sharp turn to the left revealed it, and another scene of witcheries. Beyond it, I descried the houses, where I was to find my friends; but on the hither side—first the park and church which I had just left—then the pretty and irregularly-dispersed village tenements, jutting down towards the river,—all backed by a sheltering array of stately wood, every tree of which might be a study for the artist. And now on the bridge, the eye, directed to the left, sees a small mill on the other side; the wheel was busy, and the waters it had parted with were in foam, rushing towards the bridge; it gave just enough of animation to a scene which, without it, was almost too quiet, too serene. The little mill had a farm-house attached to it, with all the pleasant features of rural life about it. But the object most attractive was, first at the door of the mill, a large waggon, with yellow body and red wheels, laden with sacks of flour piled high upon it, while the noble team of horses, which were to bear it away—large, fat, sleek and black, were enjoying their leisure in feeding on a truss of hay, under the shade of an ancient walnut-tree, a little distance off in the fore-ground. The autumnal tints of the walnut



leaf were delightfully vivid, and, touched by the evening sun, gave additional brilliancy and intenser harmony to the whole of this enchanting little landscape. Could nature have furnished a scene more rich or more perfectly grouped? But rapt as I was, it was necessary to break the spell, and move I must. I had not far to go or long to seek before the hearty voice of my excellent friend E. F. was ready to hail me. He and his good wife, four daughters and three sons, had for some weeks been occupying a crazy old cottage of a couple of stories high, with hardly an even floor or a straight wall, and with only such questionable furniture as could be suitably seen in a tenement so rough, wild, odd and out-of-the-way; yet it was good to be there—right pleasant to meet with such a merry, rattling, hearty greeting. Mr. F. loves river scenery, and every summer sets himself down on the banks of his favourite Thames, at any place forty miles up or down, in the neighbourhood of Reading, where an empty house, which no one else would think of, may be had, and which a country upholsterer, a faithful retainer of his, furnishes for the season, in such rough and cheap style as he and his joyous family would prefer to all the grandeur of Chatsworth House or Windsor Castle. Here was I—but what was to be enacted first? ‘Why didn’t I come sooner? They expected me to their early dinner.’ ‘Couldn’t help it.’ ‘Well, must make the best of our time.’ ‘Maria, get up some dinner in all haste, for Armstrong must have a row on the river before the evening closes in.’ ‘Nay,’ said I, ‘the river first, and the dinner after.’ ‘Oh, very well—agreed. Harry, my boy, carry down the cushions; and you, Tom, the awning, in case of a shower; I’ll see to the oars.’ No sooner said than away we went, and after some baling out and other adjustment, we were on board. I was to see some favourite reaches of the river, which our friend had sketched or was sketching; at every pull of the oar, some new object or varied feature—that willow, that lock, that tree, that pleasant grass lawn, that beautiful tint, heightened by alternating light and shade—were ever such sedges? and even that river-weed tangling with the oar, had not it too its beauty for the eye of my artist friend—aye, and even for mine, who had learned from him still more to admire and love even

commonest things in this store-house of rude, undressed, quiet nature. But the navigation was obstructed by something more impracticable than the weeds—we had come to a weir; if, however, rather impracticable to the boat, it was not so to us. Out we got, and, landing on the nearest bank, were quickly in another boat, which enabled us to explore some further but similar beauties. But I must own to having been particularly interested in one part of the river when we stood again upon the bank; it was one end of the weir, where was a sluice-gate, on either side of which Mr. F. and his boys were in the habit of taking a plunge every morning before breakfast. If they liked a quiet plunge, then into the deep, deep water above the weir; but if a conflict with the foaming element just after it had leaped from the top to the bottom of the weir on the other side was more to their fancy, then into that cauldron they plunged from outside of the sluice-gate, with plenty of depth to receive them, and the amusement besides of buffeting with the angry waters, which carried them away to the quieter part of the stream. Was not this delightful?

“Well, it was now wending towards dusk, and my dinner had yet to be disposed of; so hurrying back to our original point of embarkation, again we were at the cottage and very soon I was at my repast; rough it was, like everything else within the influence of this curious place, but plenty of it, and an appetite like that of one of the river pike to do it honour. But the sauce next to this most piquant, was the chat of mine host, who sat by me, and by his exhilarating talk and excellent wine withal, of which I sparingly partook, helped to bring to its close one of the most charming days of friendly and rational enjoyment I ever experienced. But even yet all the kindness and off-handed readiness to render a service, which the host and hostess are remarkable for, were not exhausted. It was nearly three miles to the station; but Mr. F. had a pony-carriage and a pony for it too; moreover, as they would not let me go without companions, dark as it was and now showery, into it Mr. and Mrs. F. and one of the boys would come, the two latter sitting behind, Mr. F. and I in front. And such a pony as it was! the fellow actually

never laid leg to ground; he flew; and though raining, and now somewhat cold, a pleasanter drive I have hardly ever enjoyed. We were just in time at the station, and so, with a hearty good-bye and fraternal adieux, my friends returned to the precincts of their river god, and I committed myself to the tender mercies of the G. W. R. for Bristol."

A pic-nic party, July 24th, 1852:

"Just as I reached the drawing-room landing, who should arrive but Mr. Henry P—— and Emily, who came to secure our junction with his monster party to Brockley Combe. At half-past two, F., little F., Dicky and self, proceeded accordingly to the ferry, and discovered on the other side 'a drag,' or long open carriage, with four gray horses and two postillions in scarlet, ready to take us up, with the addition of Mr. P.'s own phaeton in case of need. About five-and-twenty souls (with bodies), young and old, were packed into the former. Our way lay through the beautiful village of Long Ashton, at the church of which we saw the funeral cortège of Mrs. Upton Smith, late proprietress of the noble park and property adjoining and around. It formed a striking contrast with the gay and juvenile party, of which we elders were a very small though sympathetic portion, and contributed an incident in the occurrences of the day entitled to its share of durable remembrance. The country was looking lovely in all directions, as we whirled along through the heart of the vale of Ashton, until we arrived at Brockley Hall, close to the entrance of the sequestered Combe. There we parted from the road, and pursued our doubtful way through the forest, lined on one side by noble rocks, which we occasionally saw beetling over our heads, and out-topping some of the tallest and most ancient of the trees with which they shared the dominion of this strange and interesting wilderness. We were not sure where to find the ranger's cottage, which was to be the baiting-place for our horses and the point d'appui for our own refectory operations. Assistance, however, was at hand. A vast tree, monarch of the forest, stood at the parting of the Woodland Lane at its upper extremity. It might have harboured a regiment of men.

It did harbour at that moment a company of gipsies. Their horses were browsing by the edge of the road. Their waggons were drawn up in the shade which they helped to complete; their culinary furniture lay spread at their side, and their fire of dried sticks threw up a smoke in mysterious harmony with the grotesque and romantic character of this unexpected scene. The human figures were not slow to present themselves; swarthy and stalwart were the men, and not unbefitting in form and aspect the curious partners, whether mothers, wives or children, who composed the *gentle* remainder of the group. Without exception, these men and women were all handsome, well clad, and seemingly well to do. Jocularly inquiring where and how we could have some tea in the woods, their friendly services were soon proffered. Their fire was ready, 'grannie would lend her kettle,' and they would furnish the cups. And by way of inducement, while preparing our repast, they would play us some music (a fiddle and tambourine), strike up a dance, or tell the young ladies their fortunes! There might have been time worse spent and far less fun, than in availing ourselves of some of these offers, and prolonging our stay among these vagrant children of Egypt, full of nature, full of adventure, and not less full, we may venture to say, of diverse experience in roguery. Time, however, would not permit; and after some embarrassment as to which road to take, we succeeded in reaching an open tract, in which was seated a characteristic, wild and naked-looking tenement, called the Wanderer's Cottage. Soon the horses were unharnessed, the ladies were afoot, the baskets were unloaded, and the materials for a fire,—to be lighted by Mr. G—— W——, of American experience of life in the woods,—were borne to the spot about to be selected for our spread. On this fire we purposed boiling our water in the kettle of the 'gipsy grannie' (for so her swarthy descendant most suitably styled her), which had actually been borrowed by the master of our party for that needful purpose, together with a bill-hook for chopping up the sticks. Mr. W.'s operations succeeded to admiration; the straw was speedily in a blaze, the sticks were obedient to its influence, the kettle began to sing, and, with plenty of the 'leaf,' never was a purer infusion

produced, and never was enjoyment of the fragrant herb, enhanced by the addition of a goodly supply of cream from the farm-house, more complete, more welcome or more satisfying. In every particular the efforts of the host were alike successful. Sandwiches, tongue, fruit, cake, marmalade, champagne, claret. What more? Appetites ready to do them justice; good humour to furnish them with the choicest relish; plenty at our hand; youth and health at our side; and a landscape before us and around, with a hill-side air to quicken our senses to its charms, which could leave nothing for imagination to wish for or description to surpass. It was a memorable day, and a suitable theme of thanks for every grateful and thoughtful heart."

Here is another pleasant glimpse of him with his wife and children at Clevedon :

"May 29, 1851—Thursday. This was to be a leave-taking day of pleasant Clevedon. And the weather was just such as to render our last day there one of the most agreeable in recollection of any we had passed. Having determined the evening before to be up in time to enjoy an early morning ramble, mamma, Francie and I were by half-past six on the road to Sir Abraham's Hill. Having a little the start of me, I followed them across the hill behind our house, overtaking them as they were on their ascent of the village side of the hill. A loud hail brought them to, and we were soon together. And then, such a ramble! such sights and smells and sounds! Everything that could delight the heart or sense, the eye or soul, was there, from the burnished morning gleam of the channel and the illuminated hills far and near, to the rich foliage of the woods beside us and the flowery herbage at our feet; the one now affording us opportunity of surveying the green and gold beetle sucking the juices in a buttercup; the other, again, crowning our enjoyment by its harbouring of nightingales, whose notes occasionally caught our ears as they blended with the song of the thrush, the blackbird, and the thousand feathered choristers who bid us welcome in our morning walk. Nor should we forget the pleasant impression of the harsh scream of the woodpecker, which, like a

skilful discord in music, added to the charm by its delicious wildness, and the assurance it gave that Nature was here paramount, and our as well as its security from intrusion complete.

“Never, surely, was virtue more thoroughly rewarded than that which led us on this sweetest of mornings to abridge our slumbers, in order to enjoy, amidst some of the most delightful scenery of Somersetshire, the greetings of the early sun and the dewy freshness of the grass, the flowers and the woods, which seemed to be as sensible as ourselves of its life-giving and mystic power.”

And again, during a sojourn at Dawlish in search of health, Feb. 20, 1852:

“One of our first most successful excursions was by the Teignmouth road to the high cliffs nearest to Dawlish, a scene just sufficient to whet our interest for further and future explorations in the same direction. The opportunity soon arrived; and, in company with little Alice Castle, a sweet, lively child, on one fine day we pursued the road as far as a house called the Lobster, and there, parting from it, turned into a field which soon disclosed some paths connecting with others beyond, by which we at length reached the spot only second to Fairhead Promontory, near Ballycastle, in Antrim, in abruptness, perpendicular altitude and sublimity. It was just where the cliffs called the Parson and Clerk abutted on the main road. We looked down upon them, and fearful and glorious it was to survey that *tout ensemble* of cliff, sea and coast. It was a memorable sight, and an ever dear and holy one to me. The day was so bright, the dear young people with us so well and so merry, my wife so pleased, and I so blessed in recovered health and spirits,—what could be wanting to fill our cup of blessedness and joy? How irresistibly in such circumstances the heart rises to God! ‘of all his gifts, Himself the crown;’ and, paradoxical as it may seem, all in those moments, whether consciously or not, must have felt his happy-making presence. . . .

“But the sea in its placid and occasionally in its agitated moods was our daily and hourly source of enjoyment, and its foam at

high tides, with a fresh breeze from the east, was frequently sublime. One especial day of enjoyment we had in company with Mr. Hincks, of Exeter, who came by invitation to accompany us in a delightful ramble upon the sands and among the rocks, to gather sea-anemones, hermit crabs, and polypi of endless variety and wonder. Mr. H. is a learned naturalist, and his instructive society afforded us a great treat.

"One morning, just about five o'clock, I got up to look out of the window. It was a happy thought, for so impressive a scene I had scarcely ever looked upon before. To the east, the dawn was faintly beginning to break, and the first hues of green and yellow were just shewing by what path the sun would, in another hour or so, be preparing to emerge from his ocean bed. Turning the eye to the west, there was a crescent moon in a perfectly cloudless sky, and overhanging a sea so motionless and silent, that, if it were not the Atlantic, one might have taken it for an unruffled lake. Moon and stars and dawn and sea and sky, at such an hour and on such a morning, what hymning was there to Him who called them into being and appointed them their places! There was neither speech nor language, but their voices will never leave my ear."

A visit into Worcestershire (from Diary, June, 1853):

"At Malvern, Miss B——'s servant was waiting for me, and presently I had the pleasure of meeting two Misses B——, aunt and niece, who had reserved for me a front seat in their phaeton, which was to take us to Brand Lodge, about three miles beyond Malvern, on the Hereford side of the hill. The eldest Miss B——, mine especial hostess, as indeed all the party, soon made me feel that I was cordially welcome at their charming little cottage.

"After a pleasant saunter in the morning of the next day, partly before and partly after breakfast, looking upon the wild hills and glorious valleys around,—Miss B——'s cottage being situated near the base of the Herefordshire Beacon, the highest point of the Malvern range,—we all started off on a walk along the further side of the Beacon, giving us a delicious view of Little Malvern and Mr. Berrington's old mansion and the church adjoin-

ing, and presently opening to us a wider range to the right, which embraced, as its principal feature, Eastnor Castle, the seat of the Earl Somers. After the luncheon which waited the party on its return to the cottage, Misses P. and E. B—— accompanied me in the phaeton in a drive to Eastnor Park and home by Ledbury, which to me was truly delightful. The avenue to the former was quite a mile long, yew-trees and oaks prevailing. There were large quantities of the bilberry having the appearance of a dwarf oak, and purposely grown as food for pheasants, which delight in the berry of the plant. Here also the phenomenon was seen of the misletoe growing on the upper branches of the oak. I had till then been ignorant enough to suppose that this was the tree to which the parasitical plant was most attached, and that the name was given to the *druidical* worship from the fact of the use made of this plant, which was peculiar to the oak— $\Delta\rho\nu\varsigma$ ; the name was indeed so derived, but from the *exceptional*, not the general, fact of the misletoe being found on that tree. When so found, it was regarded by the Druids as a portent or an omen of extraordinary importance, and the cutting of the misletoe from the oak constituted the most prominent and solemn of all their religious rites. This tree, therefore, in Eastnor Park is quite an object of interest to visitors who are curious in this sort of legendary lore. A circumstance which, I must own, had a more lively interest for me at the moment, was the sudden appearance of a rabbit upon the avenue, running away as fast as it could, and uttering screams of distress; the creature was pursued by a little stoat—the only time I ever saw a live one—which was sure to come up with its prey, and the poor rabbit gave most significant tokens of its persuasion that its minutes were numbered, and that it should never browse on its favourite glade again.

“Lord Somers’s castle, though a modern structure and seated in a lovely country, is by no means imposing in itself, nor are the grounds, apparently, kept up with any particular attention to display or ornament. In the little hamlet or scattered village immediately adjoining, there is a church, also quite new, deservedly admired for its mediæval character, and the perfection



of its details as a specimen, in small, of the ecclesiastical architecture of that period. Its picturesque situation, embosomed as it was among stately trees almost medieval in their age, hard by the lordly castle of the proprietor, and revealing at some hundred yards away the house of the rector, harmonizing in all its aspects with the character of the scene around,—its seclusion, its repose, its dignity, perhaps its pride too, as the connecting link between the humble villagers and their feudal lord,—altogether produced a most pleasing and impressive effect.

“Returning to our phaeton, which we had left for the purpose of inspecting the interior of the church, we then had a pleasant drive, the afternoon being very fine, to Ledbury, where our first object was the fine old church, in one of the narrow but quiet old approaches to which Miss B—— pointed out the house which her grandfather had owned, and where, I believe, her father was born. After inspecting the church, we next proceeded, on the suggestion of Miss B——, to make a call on an old widow lady residing hard by. It appeared this lady was the relict of a banker in London, who used to retire here in summer, and having lately died, his widow and one daughter continued to occupy the residence which we were about to visit. Not prepared for anything particular, I yielded my assent to Miss B——’s proposition rather as a courtesy to her than from any desire to see the interior of a house which gave no sign of anything that could interest a stranger, or to form a momentary acquaintance with some probably insipid old lady of 70 or 80.

“We pulled the street bell, a portress opened the gate, and we found ourselves in a paved quadrangle, where I thought a goodly space was occupied to very little advantage, and that had it been shrubbed and dressed it would have done more credit to the taste of the owner. The building was plain but spacious, and was entered by a hall-door, not in the front, but rather in a wing, where we were admitted by a footman, whose dress and address bespoke something more than ordinary with respect to the condition and rank of the family into whose presence he was to usher us. Mrs. —— was ‘at home,’ and we followed the servant through a handsome oak hall and some lengthened corridors,

lined with the same material, into a fine old library, connected by folding-doors with a drawing-room of great size and very elegant and sumptuous furniture ; but all betokening the fashion of a past day, and the long-established luxuries of a family of hereditary if not of titled dignity. There we sat, in expectation of the appearance of our old lady ; and there we sat on and on, but no old lady was forthcoming ; when it was proposed that we should ring up the footman and demand explanations. On better thoughts, however, it was suggested as a preferable plan to pass through a glass door, which lay temptingly open, into some beautiful garden grounds, where it was supposed the object of our inquiry might be engaged with her flowers, and where we might have the agreeable opportunity of joining her in her walk. The scheme was at once adopted, and forth we went ; but who would have expected such a paradise ? It was a parterre adorned with flowers and shrubs of the rarest beauty, arranged in the most exquisite taste, for a continuance of one hundred yards ; the whole forming a border, as it were, to a deer-park, from which it was separated by an invisible fence ; and contrasting with very striking effect with the ruder but noble scenery to which it formed so graceful an appendage. Here we wandered in a state of calm delight, as if our minds were in exact response to the character of the scene around us ; and in this mood we were just returning to our glass door without meeting or even hearing of the venerable proprietress, when lo ! just as we had faced about, a figure presented itself on the broad gravel walk before us. It was that of the lady we had so long been seeking, the aged Mrs. — herself, who, hearing at length of our visit, was making such haste as she could to meet us, and it was just the place most fitting for us to meet her—she seemed its very genius. Beautiful in old age, courteous to fascination in her manner, of the sweetest voice possible, and even elegant to a nicety in her dress, she gave such an impress of dignity to the whole combination of objects, that they seemed to reflect one another as if she were part of them and they of her, and produced a sense of harmony which left nothing to be desired, except the pleasure of enjoying it for a much longer time than a morning visit would admit of,

But alas ! after a few minutes' conversation on the terrace and in the library, where we were introduced to the daughter and a young grandson who had come from Eton to spend the holidays, we were obliged to make our courtesies and retire,—Miss B—not a little pleased at the unexpected treat she had procured for me, and I rendering her all praise for the skill with which she had kept me in a state of total unpreparedness for it ; listening with composure to my inert consent to accompany her, and to my critical remarks on the paved court and the odd old-fashioned looking house, &c., and most of all, never breathing a word of the living treasure, the delightful old lady, to whom it all belonged.

“ June 16th. A most lovely day ; enjoyed myself immensely. Breakfast over, with a short prelusive ramble on the grass lawn, unhatted, I once more sought the pleasant lanes and avenues adjacent to the house. On the road side a few hundred yards on, I saw a gipsy group under a tent, with their donkey, waggon and crockery, and pretty brown children, according to the rule of that ilk. But one rule affecting the fraternity I had not known before ; it seems they are never allowed to be more than one night at a time encamped in any inhabited locality ; the farmers are afraid of them, and think they would be minus some cocks and hens or other rustic wealth, if these mysterious strangers were allowed to domicile for any longer period. Nevertheless, both farmers and gipsies are sufficiently sabbatarian to honour the Sunday as a day on which travelling is unlawful, and so they come on Saturday and remain till Monday. Turning in another direction, I was tempted to get over a field-gate, and soon reached a field where a plough was at work, the rich loam just turned up—how delicious the smell ! A glorious sun was overhead, a country of varied surface and surpassing beauty was spread out before me ; it was morning, in the heart of England ; every sight, sound and smell combining to render my enjoyment perfect. No wonder I could have resigned himself a willing captive to its fascination, and loitered and lingered on, had I not remembered the pleasures which awaited me of another kind, and that to-day I was to return to my home, sweet home.

Having taken in as much delight as some fifteen or twenty minutes could yield in the midst of such a scene, I hastened back to the cottage, and soon had my travelling apparatus ready for road and rail. Then the ladies proceeded to their own allotment in the flower garden, to procure me some of their roots and cuttings; this kind object effected, and the gardener having carefully packed the plants, the moment of leave-taking arrived, and with feelings of gratitude on my part and of respect and regard, which I believe were quite mutual, I bade my kind friends farewell," &c. &c.

And agreeably with the feelings displayed in these autobiographical extracts, he has described "the man of God," and supposed the heart most penetrated with a sense of the beauty of "things divine," to be most occupied, in its moments of leisure from duty, with the beauty of "these things of earth." Preaching on the text, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," he says,—

"Shall we glance at the recreations and the pleasures in which our man of God will have most disposition to indulge? This, indeed, would be a rash attempt. For God has strewed pleasures and enjoyments so thick around us, that how to choose or where to seek, were a problem which no man could easily solve for another. But this, at any rate, will be prevailingly true,—that his tastes will be simple, and habitually conversant with things most pure. Perhaps the strongest attraction among the minor and more familiar joys of life, is that taste which draws us to the love and culture of 'the elegant and beautiful' which abound in our fields, our hedges and our gardens. Verily, the love of flowers savours of the love of God! So directly do they speak of His goodness—so eloquently do they discourse of His glory. 'The lily' (so it has been said) 'looked to Christ more and something diviner than it does to us, when he spoke of its being arrayed in all that glory.' And God so clothing the grass of the field, is a way of thinking on these simple things which well might clothe our souls in faith. The sentiment for flowers is indeed one of the most precious sources of the common

joy which binds us not only in gratitude to God, but in sympathy to man.

“What stirrings of heart when these treasures—some familiar, some whose beauty had never been imagined—are found in the Arctic recesses! A wilderness around, a paradise at our feet! And what thrillings of home, what awakenings of the early and the tender, what amazement at the mysterious as well as loving ways of God, when these symbols of his goodness, these first companions of our English and our peaceful life, arrest the eye even on the plains which are purpled with the blood and furrowed by the missiles of relentless war!\* Oh that men ‘were in the fear of the Lord all the day,’ when these terrible contrasts would be banished the earth, and Peace with her amarynth crown would walk unmolested and beloved among the far-spreading, God-fearing, Christ-loving subjects of her reign; earth subduing in another fashion, replenishing it with joy, and mantling it with beauty! Yet we spoke of a fear of the Lord which brought with it courage. And verily, what else can carry a human soul to the full dimensions of its moral grandeur and its majestic daring? We have, in passing, directed our thoughts to the Arctic—barren for the most part indeed, yet rich in recollections of virtue and humanity, of enterprize and heroism, which the world would not now be fain to part with. And these, the offspring of a faith and habitual communion with God, never more grandly or touchingly shewn than in the presence of those yawning masses of eternal ice which closed over the lost body of the ever-memorable and gallant Bellot! ‘When the Lord protects us, not a hair of our heads shall be touched.’ He had just said it, and then sank! And the Lord ‘protected’ him—the Lord received him—the Lord provided for him, and took him to the home of the true, the gallant and the good!

“And who shall forget those incidents, crowding on each other in the presence of battle, when ‘the fear of the Lord’ was still in the ascendant, and the roar of man’s enginery of death

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\* This sermon was preached during the war in the Crimea, and this allusion is to the many letters by our soldiers published in the newspapers, describing the familiar flowers they found there.

was less heard by the listening soul than 'the still small voice within,'—'God for ever bless you, my beloved ones! If it be His will that I fall in the performance of my duty and the defence of my country, I most humbly pray, 'Thy will be done!' And if we meet not again in this world, may we all meet in the mansion of our Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ!' Such were the last written words of a Christian soldier, of a gallant leader, who perished in the first onset of the first light of day."\*

In another sermon, he thus speaks of music as an aid to devotion, and of his enjoyment of it:†

"Without anything more than a natural, and much, though too late, to my regret with nothing of a cultivated, love for music, I must own myself for one who could very inadequately convey my admiration, and not simply my relish, acute though it be, but truth to say my reverence and almost my passion for this the least earthly of the arts. . . . There is something not only peculiar, but pre-eminent, in this faculty of music. In particular we would say, it cannot be dissolved from truth; and complicated, inartificial, or even inarticulate as it may be in its forms, it is essentially resolvable into language. It is then, if so we may define it, truth clothed in melody and speaking to the soul through a channel known only to itself. If we might compare together eloquence, poetry and music, and consider them rather in the elements of their structure, than their every-day and practical importance, we should place them in a climax, and look upon eloquence as earnest and impassioned truth, poetry as decorated and figurative truth, and music, besides all these, as peculiarly and alone sensitive truth. Eloquence the force, poetry the dress, music the very soul of truth. Eloquence in more immediate relation to the intellect, poetry to the imagination, music to the feelings. Each concentrated truth. But music, together with the essentials of the rest, commanding an avenue to the *interior*

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\* Lieutenant-Colonel Shadforth, 57th regiment, in a letter written the night before the repulsed assault on the Redan, June 18th, 1855.

† Preached on the re-opening, after enlargement, of the organ in Lewin's-Mead chapel.

man, consecrated to its single and unshared accommodation. In fine, to dismiss our attempts at elucidation or description, we might view perhaps these beautiful faculties as embodied in the form of a pyramid,—eloquence the base, poetry the interval, and music the apex, highest and nearest to heaven.

“And so it might seem that while tarrying here on earth as a solace and instructress of men, it betrays its impatience for home,—the place whence it descended and where it is destined to revert and to be and remain for ever. Yet ere it return, were it not well to court with this heavenly visitant a nearer intimacy, and embrace at her hands such uses and aids as she is willing to communicate, in order to hasten or smooth our course to the abode she beckons and leads to? . . . .

“Generally, I would say, it behoves you to remember that we are not all spirit, we are not all soul, we are not all intellect and thought. We are body and nerve, flesh and blood, as well as spirit. We are sensitive beings, externally impressible beings, and largely susceptible of artificial encouragements and supports. Music, architecture, ornament, even comfort, are not to be neglected. *Essentials* they are never to supersede; but still there are circumstantial, and most important ones, which may not, with impunity to your good name and your effective and attractive worship, be overlooked. Endeavour should be made that each one who comes to this place should feel and say, ‘I was glad when they said to me, we will go up unto the house of the Lord!’ Oh it is a melancholy sight, it is a wretched sight, to behold in some places, and at some times, your twos and your threes, your tens or your twenties, dribbling into the spaces which should be filled with God-believing, God-gathered numbers, coming, and eagerly coming, into his presence with joy and into his courts with praise!”

And again, in a sermon preached on March 2nd, 1856:

“Who with a whole mind, with an unimpaired nature, with a true perception of the goodness of God in the rich endowments of the soul, would quarrel with its love of music? Who can be insensible to the mystery of sound? And who has not felt for

the moment more spiritualized, more akin to the spheres above, as he has listened in rapt attention to the skilled appeal of this wonderful art to whatever was within him of refined and beautiful? Why I have known a single touch on a single string, but just prolonged enough to fill the ear, bring moisture to the eye and thrilling to the heart of thousands. And is that an art, given of God, to be discarded, suspected or underrated, in the ordering of our worship or in the culture of our souls? But is not all harmony akin? Why be disaffected to the sister arts? Is not architecture, harmony in stone, frozen music? And who can stand beneath the lofty dome or uplifted arch, overtopping the solemn and silent area on which he treads, without whisperings of an unspoken homily on the littleness of self, yet sublimity, yea, eternity of man?"

In the same spirit he writes to a friend who had written an article in Blackwood's Magazine on M. Rio's Poetry of Christian Art:

"I shall rejoice to read your article in Blackwood, and I hope you will spare me the loan of the number which contains it, whenever most convenient to you. . . . In treating of the Poetry of Christian Art, as to its main principles, I am sure you will have my full sympathy. For none can have a higher enthusiasm than myself as to all that can adorn and dignify the grandest duty of a human soul, its public and stated worship of the Supreme Being. But always the Christian Art must dignify as well as adorn. Indeed, it cannot truly do the one without implying the other. And therefore I am not quite without fear that I may be accounted a *heretic* on certain points in this respect, as I have long and incorrigibly been in other branches of Christian study. Do not start when I tell you that even Raphael's art could never reconcile me to his picture of the Assumption (is it not?) where, if I remember, the Father is represented as looking with delighted complacency from behind a cloud on the Virgin Mary as she is rising up to heaven. Such grotesque representations degrade Art as much as they outrage theological truth; and the measure of my repugnance and annoyance when looking at them, may



best be imagined by the infinitely different emotions stirred through all my nature when I stand beneath the arches and the clustered pillars of the minsters of York or Durham! There all is sublimity, with nothing to interrupt, but everything to intensify, the impressions of mingled awe and admiration, as the eye lifts itself to the survey of those mysterious harmonies of symmetry, simplicity and vastness.

"In such moments, the soul is conscious of being itself a *poem*, of which those outer objects are but the happy *reflex*; being only so beautiful and impressive as the embodiment of conceptions which they only *awaken*, but do not infuse. The poem was *already within*, even more truly than the breathing form within the block, and that

‘high embowered roof  
With antique pillars massive proof,’

and all the sacred tracery with which they are enriched, are but the exquisite type in which it is printed off. So true and precious is all this meaning of Art, that its departure into the recesses of Romish mythology on the one hand, or its melancholy inanimation and non-entity in the soberer ‘modes of faith,’—our own chiefly among the number,—on the other, are matter of almost equally painful contemplation with me. ‘Almost,’ but not quite. For I confess I could be easier reconciled to the *extravagance* of the Papist, than to the bald and stupid *deficiency* of the Unitarian. A deficiency the less to be forgiven from its profound injustice to the lofty and pure aspirations of a faith which I hold to be, as nearly as the medium of language will admit, the very transcript of the mind of God and the truth of Christ.

"The object, then, of all just criticism on the ‘Poetry of Christian Art,’ as it seems to me, ought to be the preservation of the ‘*via media*’ between the destitution too often visible in the one, and the prodigality, not seldom offensive, in the other,—including in the circle of this Art, music, architecture and painting. All which, yet most of all the first, may help, and *will* help, in spiritualizing, refining and exalting this poor, world-beleaguered, vulgarized mind of ours, which, with all its temptations, has need of all the aids to bettered thought and life which Christian

worship enshrined in Christian art can yield it. It would not fall in your way, though not the less true it is, that eloquence and the services of the teaching voice are portions of that art which ought to be cultivated. For what is the mission of eloquence or spoken composition, but reaching through the *ear*, as it is that of *manual* art to reach through the *eye*, the fountains of the spiritual life ?

“A defective theory is often the parent and apologist of a defective practice. Truth is a sphere, any part of which wanting, the charm of symmetry is gone ; and in so far we have deformity instead of beauty. The sympathies with the good and true should be free and full, and flow generally through all the channels of our being. Then ‘*art*’ *will not end with itself*, but will adorn and *fructify the life*, and bring our willing hand as well as our chastened heart to every good word and work, which has for its aim the virtue, the happiness and the progress, of the *whole* human race. Ever, my dear friend, yours,” &c.

Here are his impressions on visiting the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851 :

“June 12. Set off for the ‘Exhibition!’ At a little after eleven, found myself in front of this famed building, the main approach to which, from its organized array of innumerable vehicles to and from, was more striking by far than the first sight of the structure itself. In arriving by the Knightsbridge road, one *only* gets a glimpse of it. The whole of the front on that side is so completely veiled by the line of trees, that you only see a very broken outline of the building, which announces itself principally by the long line of flags on the top of it, which you see above the trees. In this manner, the feeling of surprise, and the first expectations of awe and wonder, must, I should think, with all visitors, as they certainly were with me, be quite taken away. Or rather, a new species of wonder arises in the mind, that so vast and famed a thing, containing so much both of the work and actual presence of men, should, after all, seem *so quiet* and so simple, and be so utterly *noiseless* and free from all confusion or excitement, as you look on it from without for the first time.

“ This momentary reversal of the first impressions anticipated, very much influenced my feeling on reaching the interior. It was not a disappointed, but rather a *sobered*, feeling which possessed me. It is said of St. Peter's at Rome, that one does not and cannot at first realize its vastness and grandeur ; and so I felt it now. The transept idealized itself to me as a sort of living thing, and it seemed rather to invite me to familiarity and ease by the graciousness and softness which it diffused around it, than to startle me by its grandeur and subdue me by its sublimity.

“ Perhaps one of the most decisive marks of the prodigious space enclosed in this central portion of the building, was the apparent smallness of the *huge trees*, which formed a conspicuous but by no means an engrossing, object among its embellishments. They merely gave an elegance and a finish to the general effect, just as a plant or two might do in a well-furnished drawing-room. They certainly gave perfection to this department of this truly wonderful structure ; and what was at first imagined to constitute a rather impracticable difficulty to Mr. Paxton, only became, under the mastery of his mind, a new evidence of his power and an unexpected element in his triumph.

“ The luxury of standing by the great glass fount,—the coolness, the space, the order, the comfort, the silence, and yet the multitudinous human life that was all this time enjoying this luxury and comfort, and surrendering itself in quiet transport to the influence of all it saw and felt, constituted an incomprehensible whole of physical and mental delight, such as no words can speak, and no description can approach. . . . .

“ Three hours and a half in this Palace of enchantment brought me into presence of more wonders and objects of admiration than time or space can now suffice to tell. The glass fount, the Queen's portrait on Sèvres china, the Amazon, the colossal statues of Eldon and Stowell, the Canadian casks of flour, the two horses rampant in the French compartment, Godfrey of Bouillon, the Two Sisters fishing, the Achilles wounded, ‘ the Greek Slave ’ in the United States' division (an exquisite piece), and the view from the gallery of the whole length of the build-

ing,—these surely were enough for one short morning's survey, and for one long life's recollection!"

With the same taste and delicacy of feeling he writes of homes for the dead as of temples for the living:

"England has been among the latest of the countries of Europe in attending to that duty, which might justly seem to be among the first in the thoughts of a civilized people,—the pious and adequate care of the receptacles of the dead.

"Yet, as in other ameliorations which have originated elsewhere, the example when once set has seldom been lost upon our country, so in respect to the solemn duty of the living to the departed, a feeling has begun to evince itself which in many directions is producing those results so much to be expected in every well-ordered community, and so much to be desired by every heart which is not insensible to the dearest affections of humanity. In some situations, contrasted with others, it is true there might seem to be less necessity for any peculiar exertion of care, or any awakened sensibility, in reference to the place of the dead. In rural situations, for the most part, the force of locality itself confers upon the tomb all the sanctity it claims, and the mourner finds sympathy, as the moralist finds dignity and fitness, in the eloquent, though inanimate, objects which throw their solemn influence around it. The 'ivy-mantled tower,'

'The rugged elms, the yew-tree's shade,'

the tufted grass, perhaps 'the running brook,' emblem of life, pursuing its way to the ocean of eternity,—these all, by the combination and harmony of their forms, and the air of seclusion, security and repose which they breathe, seldom fail of leaving the most grateful and salutary impressions even on the mind of the most casual observer.

"An influence so beautiful and so useful, the materials of which nowhere more extensively abound than in the enviable retirements of England, whose 'country churchyard' has alike been the theme of her poets and the pride of her people,—an influence so useful and so touching, it is not often possible to

associate with the receptacles of the dead within the crowded limits of towns and cities.

“Yet much has been attempted and much has been accomplished. Primarily, the public health has been a motive for selecting situations for interment as much as possible removed from the most crowded parts of cities; while in so doing the opportunity has not been lost of *beautifying* these receptacles, and rendering them, while still within daily sight of the living, as attractive by their taste as instructive from their solemnity.

“In such designs, it is conceived that too much importance cannot be attributed to these objects. Places of interment for the human dead *ought* to be made inviting; while they ought *not* to be made (wherever it is avoidable) either thoroughfares or scenes of inconsiderate and promiscuous resort. We ought to make them attractive rather than repulsive to the affections of the mourner; and while we would guard them by seclusion, and honour them by appropriate adornment, we would keep them enough within the general view to be a lesson of mortality to the living and unheeding crowd, and a perpetual admonition to rich and poor, to great and low, that ALL

‘Await alike th’ inevitable hour!’”

## CHAPTER IV.

### PUBLIC LIFE. RELIGION AND POLITICS.

IN the last chapter we saw Mr. Armstrong as it were behind the scenes, in the domestic and social circle, in the fields and in his study. I would fain hope that my readers have found materials enough in his own written words, the unadulterated expressions of his lonely musings, to form a mental picture of the man as I have spoken of him from my own experience. And now I will endeavour to describe him in his public life, to trace the connection between his thoughts and acts, and test the consistency of his theory and his practice when time had mellowed his opinions, added the useful element of long experience, and left his judgment calm.

The violent rupture of early associations, the destruction of the household gods of infancy and youth, the terrible struggles with mental doubts, the conflicting scruples of a tender conscience,—these trials he had passed through and conquered. But they had left many wounds which, although healed at the time of which I am about to speak, were quickly torn open afresh by the sight or the infliction of injustice, and the too constant practice in the political and religious world of uncharitableness and unchristian hate. Hence he appeared sometimes unnecessarily impatient with men of opposite views, and too sensitive to attacks upon the opinions which were so deeply rooted in his own mind and affections. Still his zeal and earnestness in the advocacy of what he believed to be true, his untiring energy in

the pursuit of objects which he felt to be all-important to the welfare of the world, will cover any deficiency of consideration, if any should appear, for the equally conscientious, although different, convictions of others.

The exclusion from the larger spheres of Christian influence and action to which the bigotry and prejudice of the inconsistent Protestantism of our country condemned him, would often gall and irritate his expansive heart. What wonder, then, if his words were bitter and his tone was loud when he denounced the errors in opinion which led to such disastrous action? When the good, the kind, the naturally charitable of our fellow-creatures were changed by low views of God and false views of Christ to cruel, unsocial and unreasoning bigots,—when the religion destined to be “the power of love” was changed to a power of hate,—what wonder that his great heart, his free and regenerated soul, should heave within him, indignant at the outrage, or that he should wing a sharp-pointed arrow, in the shape of a letter or a lecture, at those who thus offended? He loved his kind, he longed for human sympathy, he strived for union. “If there be anything distinctive of Christianity at all,” he writes in his note-book for the year 1853, “it is the infinite significance of a human soul, the ineffable dignity of our common nature, the paternal character of God, the filial relation in which the meanest and most degraded of us stand to Him, and the fraternal affinity we all bear to each other. If our faith be not that, it is nothing.” This was his faith, and it was his practice too. His heresy would seem to bear goodlier fruit than the orthodoxy of some who looked coldly upon him for his change of faith, and of others who shunned him altogether as “an unclean thing.” The following extracts from his journal and his correspondence are characteristic of the social religion of the British people in the nineteenth century:

“June 10, 1852. Not a single murmur from the Episcopate at the Bishop of Bath, Dr. Bagot’s induction of the flagrantly Popish Mr. Bennett into the living of Frome; but the clergy, both great and small, in a paroxysm of rage and bigotry on Dr. Stanley, late Bishop of Norwich, giving his name as a subscriber to the sermons of his venerable, inoffensive, uncontroversial and

simply Christian friend, the Rev. William Turner, of Newcastle, who might not be permitted to speak and print the most *purely practical truth* with any sanction of a dignitary of the Church of England, because he was a Unitarian, believing but in 'one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.' In this emergency, what does the worried and worthy little Bishop of Norwich say, and what comment does he leave for posterity on the amiable characteristics of the Protestant Established Church of this goodly realm of England? 'I certainly ought to have been more cautious. But what a life of wretchedness to be for ever watching over and repressing the spontaneous acts of kindness which opportunities call forth!' What a volume in these words!"

In the December following, he writes thus touchingly of his separation from his early friends:

"I have been delighted with the Life of Judge Story. . . . This great man, with all his solitude and all his study, knew and loved life wisely and well, when he said, 'Life has no independent charms; in reciprocity consists all enjoyment.' Alas! to how large an extent am I, by no conscious fault of my own, condemned to the personal experience of this truth. Not only in moral sympathy, but from social position and local residence, the enjoyment of reciprocity, and even the coldest species of intercourse, the favour now and then of an ordinary letter, is denied to me by the earlier and closer half of my acquaintance in this world."

A near relative of Mrs. Armstrong arriving in Clifton after an absence of some years, she hastened to welcome him by an invitation to her house. His reply was as follows:

"August 29, 1854.

"..... Most glad indeed should I have been to accept your kind invitation had circumstances been different from what they are. It has been a source of much trial and pain to me in coming to Bristol to feel that you were in a position as the wife of one who, standing *prominently forward* as a *teacher* of that doctrine which so dishonours the Lord Jesus who bought me with his own precious blood, that in faithfulness to him and to



his word I am called, by the express testimony of Scripture, *not to receive him nor to bid him God-speed.*

“When I look back on my boyhood and remember your kindness to me, it gives me all the more sorrow not to be able to go to your house, and, added to this, the fact of T—— and J—— being with you makes it still more painful, as we entertain much love and affection for them. But I feel that I could not look for the Lord’s blessing upon my soul, my family or the work in which I am engaged, did I not seek thus to carry out the direct command of God. My heart’s desire and earnest prayer for you and many whom I tenderly love is, that God would in his grace open your eyes to see your lost estate by nature, and the preciousness of the blood of Christ, which alone cleanses from sin and saves from the wrath to come.” . . .

Poor fanatic! some of my readers may say; such a trifle, so common and so contemptible, was scarcely worth printing in a biography. But these trifles largely influence the happiness of society, and hinder the spread of rational Christianity. The moral of this chapter would not be complete without a reference to them.

This letter called forth the following answer from Mr. Armstrong:

“Sir,—I have seen a letter addressed to my wife, and signed with your name, which I hardly know how to characterize, considered as the production of a person standing not only in the position of a near relation, but of one who might be supposed to have some advantages of education, and to some extent to be governed by the feelings of a gentleman, the principles of a Protestant, and the spirit of a Christian.

“What kind of ‘teachers’ *you* may have had, it may not be worth while to inquire. But certainly they have much to answer for in leaving you so profoundly ignorant. Do you understand what you say, or whereof you affirm, in applying that passage of 2 John (so dear to the persecuting mind) to one who, to say the least, has had equal capability and desire with yourself to come to the knowledge of the truth? All penal

laws ought to be construed strictly. You have wounded the charities of life, have broken in upon the harmonies of the family circle, have done despite to the spirit of love; and you ought to be very sure that you are justified to the letter in the use you have made of the words of the apostle. To whom have those words relation? Against whom are they spoken in warning? We learn from the 7th verse, 'Deceivers, who' (wilfully and corruptly departing from the truth, otherwise they could not be deceivers) 'confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.' Do you allege these two circumstances against me? See then the alternative. If you do, you falsify. If you cannot, you calumniate.

"You may say these words are bitter. I acknowledge it; but at your own door, the sin, whatever it be, lies. You have been the raiser of this strife; which is just one proof the more of how much you have to repent, in venturing to lay your hand on the prerogative of infallibility, and casting out a brother as evil who, seldom as he agrees with St. Austin, can say with that eminent Father, 'Though he may be in error, he will not be a heretic' (Errare possum, hereticus esse nolo).

"Were you in a frame of mind more meet for instruction, I might leave to your reflection, with more hope than I do that they might serve to awaken and enlighten you, the following words from Dr. Campbell, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Marischal College of Aberdeen, in his *Dissertations on the Gospels* (Diss. ix. p. 4, § 15):

" 'No person who, in the spirit of candour and charity, adheres to that which to the best of his judgment is right, though in this opinion he should be mistaken, is, in the scriptural sense, either schismatic or heretic; and *he*, on the contrary, whatever sect he belongs to, is most entitled to these odious appellations, who is most apt to throw the imputation upon others. Both terms, for they denote only different degrees of the same bad quality, always indicate a disposition contrary to peace, harmony and love.'

"As to the doctrine you have blindly impeached, I feel for myself but small temptation indeed to trouble you with any

thoughts from me. My only temptation to notice your charge of the doctrine I teach, 'dishonouring the Lord Jesus,' would be my concern for the delusion that prevents you from seeing that it is not *my* doctrine, but his own, and that of Him who sent him. In personally addressing you, I abstain from the questionable taste of directly *praying* for you; but I may be allowed to pray for myself that the great power of God would, through the working of his Holy Spirit, enable me to honour my dear Lord more effectually and faithfully than I do in my spirit and in my life,—to honour him by my obedience and my love, by my seeking more and more to be of the same mind that was in him; but *not* by the unbidden means which *you* suggest, if not the 'dishonouring,' yet the *mishonouring*, him by the giving him an honour which he never, never claims, but altogether repels, for himself.

"You talk of 'faithfulness to his word.' Well, as sure as Christ lived, died and rose again, and will sit in judgment on all human souls, this letter you have written virtually to me will be brought to your remembrance, and, side by side with it, those all-sufficient and express words of the Lord Jesus, John xvii. 3, anticipated in John iv. 23, confirmed in Cor. viii. 6, and declared and implied from cover to cover of the sacred volume.

"In that day, let what may be the errors of the understanding, at least let us comfort and enlarge our hearts in the belief that it will be well with *all* those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

"I am, your obedient servant,

"G. A."

We will turn, however, from his personal experiences of the penalty a man must pay even in England for practical and positive fidelity to unpopular religious opinions. They are patent to all the world, and it will suffice to mention that Mr. Armstrong was no exception to the rule.\* We will proceed to his public

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\* "Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?  
Great Socrates? and thou, diviner still,  
Whose lot it is to be by man mistaken,  
And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?  
Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,  
How was thy toil rewarded?" . . .

endeavours to correct the erroneous and incomplete views of his countrymen on the logical consequences of the Protestant doctrine of the right of private judgment, and his efforts in the cause of liberty, civil and religious.

We have already seen how carefully he watched the phenomena of the material universe. He had the same quick eye for the phenomena of the social and political world. In all public questions he took a keen interest, and scanned the daily newspaper with eager scrutiny. Whenever he found a public man speaking erroneously of Unitarians and their opinions, he forthwith wrote to set him right. Whenever the great principles he loved were attacked, his voice and pen were ready for their defence. Of this habit of writing to persons to whom he was unknown, he thus speaks in his journal :

"1851. Thursday, Jan. 2. Wrote to Lord Lansdowne and Lord J. Russell, enclosing printed copies of our Lewin's-Mead Address to the Queen, praying their earnest and honest consideration of the prayer therein. What a romancer many people would call me ! But in politics, as in other matters, ' never venture, never win.'

"Tuesday, Jan. 7. Wrote two polite and respectful notes, with copies of our L. M. Address (my pen almost refuses to declare it), to the Archbishops—actually so!—of Canterbury and York ! Yet with something of the instinctive faith of the humble shepherd-boy in Scripture, who, with a smooth pebble from his sling, smote down the giant Goliath ! Who knows what small things may accomplish as great things now ; or begin the progress to better ideas, which may dispossess the religion of our country of the foul demon of bigotry, and the practice of dogmatic denunciation ? Oh, could it be mine to lodge but a grain in the forehead of Athanasius (or his so-called Creed), with what satisfied joy could I relinquish all glory of earth in exchange for the honour of this one simple deed !

"Friday, Jan. 10. Wrote letters to Lord Carlisle and Sir George Grey, with copies of the L. M. Address, endeavouring to put a little honesty and liberality into their Ministerial minds, —a very impertinent attempt, some would think, and a very useless one, others."

The Address alluded to was called forth by the "Papal Aggression" of 1850, and deprecated any intolerant proceeding towards the Roman Catholics in England, advocating equal religious liberty for all sects and persuasions.

One of the first public measures which occupied the Parliament, and particularly affected Unitarians, after Mr. Armstrong's settlement at Bristol, was the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. He was an active member of a Committee appointed to aid in the passing of the measure, and appears to have exerted himself both energetically and usefully.

At the latter end of the year 1847, Lord John Russell appointed Dr. Hampden, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, to the see of Hereford. This appointment gave great offence to many of the Bishops and clergy of the Established Church, on account of the condemnation of "unsoundness of doctrine passed by the University of Oxford on Dr. Hampden in the year 1836." The "unsoundness" was said to be found in his Bampton Lectures delivered in 1832, and had particular reference to the questions of the Trinity and the Atonement. A protest against his confirmation by the Archbishop of Canterbury was signed by thirteen Bishops, and a memorial with the same object was addressed to the Queen by the Rev. Dr. Merewether, Dean of Hereford. As all these proceedings are matters of recent history, I need only allude to them and to the elaborate argument before the Judges, Patteson, Coleridge, Erle and Lord Denman, in the Queen's Bench, and their equally elaborate judgments on the question of issuing a mandamus to the Archbishop, commanding him to hold a Court for the purpose of hearing the opponents to the confirmation. The two former opposed, the two latter approved; the Court, therefore, being equally divided, the application was dismissed. All the religious societies and conspicuous divines of the country were roused in defence or condemnation of the suspected heretical Bishop-elect. In a long letter written by Dr. Hampden to Lord John Russell in justification of his orthodoxy, he thus alludes to Unitarians, and his manner of treating them and their opinions :

"If, on any occasion, I have ventured to call Unitarians

Christians, surely this must be understood in the wide charitable sense of the term—not in that strict sense in which it belongs to a believer in the divinity and the blessed atonement of our Lord, but in a sense not unlike that in which it is used in our Liturgy, when we pray for ‘all who profess and call themselves Christians,’ that they ‘may be led into the way of truth,’ &c. What I may have said, then, in charity of the persons or of the modes of reasoning of misbelievers, cannot in any fairness be understood as indulgence to their tenets. I repeat, I not only regard the doctrines of the holy Trinity, and of the incarnation and atonement of our Lord, and the salvation of man through faith only in him, with the truths arising out of and closely connected with these great doctrines, as most certain, but, further, as vitally important to be believed in order to a saving faith and a right practical religion.”

Mr. Armstrong was not likely to remain a passive spectator of this theological fray. He delivered a lecture on the subject in Lewin’s-Mead chapel, and wrote the following letter to Dr. Hampden, which he hoped to get published in the *Examiner* newspaper, to which he continued to be an occasional contributor :

*To the Bishop (elect) of Hereford.*

“ ‘ Semper ego auditor tantum ? nunquam ne reponam.  
Vexatus toties ? ’

“ My Lord,—It has hitherto been your fortune to be written to, and written at, by a great variety of persons and characters, but by none as yet in the character in which I am now desirous to address you. Nevertheless, so different are the positions we occupy, that if there were space for apologies it would be my duty to offer you one. Once, like you, a Churchman, I have scaled my prison-house walls, and am free—but with the calculated result of being unpatronized and obscure. While you, less venturous, in the effort to render that prison-house as little incommodious as may be, have acquired a conspicuous—in the estimation of many, an honoured—name ; and the rich, if not the unexceptionably comfortable, appointment, of one of its governors.

"In short, my Lord, I am to address you as a Unitarian. And I conceive myself the more entitled, nay, required to do so, from the peculiar relation which Unitarianism has been made to assume in the controversy which will undoubtedly bear your name to a late posterity. As regards yourself and the Unitarian, you have been the first to advert to the difference which separates your views from his; yet in a tone of consideration and candour upon which it will be the essential difficulty of my present address, to offer some words of appropriate, without seeming, I trust, to be ungenerous or ungrateful, comment.

"I regret extremely I have been under the disadvantage of not being able to procure a copy of your 'Bampton Lectures.'\* But so far as I can judge from the defences of your friends, especially that of Archdeacon Hare, I most readily declare, that on the subject of the Trinity you appear to me to be completely 'orthodox.' Having said thus, I should have no further concern with that fact, were it not that in the statement of your views, in two particulars they very closely concern me as a believer in the Unitarian interpretation of the gospel. In the first place, you speak, if not of my tenets, yet of my condition, in that aspect, in terms of indulgence and kindness. While, in the second place, you assail my tenets in terms of criticism; and familiarly supposing yourself in personal discussion with a Unitarian, as you make to him a direct appeal, arm him, of course, with a right of response, and of criticising you in return. Under each of these two heads I have something to say.

"1. I own it is so rare a thing for a Unitarian to be spoken of, in 'orthodox' circles, in terms of candour and respect, that, when it occurs, it is difficult not to meet it with an expression of thanks as well as of surprise. But more difficult still, it is, in such circumstances, to concede to a Churchman that credit for his kindness which truth compels one to subtract from his honesty.

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\* "Since the date of this letter (written in January), a perusal of this remarkable volume has but painfully deepened the impressions previously formed by the writer. With slight modifications, how strongly might the description of the Scholastic Philosophy, at pp. 13, 14 (second edition), of the 'Bampton Lectures,' remind one of the position of certain writers in the Church of England,—Samsons grinding at the mill of the Philistines!"

Most sincerely I thank you for every expression of your theological tenderness; only regretting, with equal sincerity, that you are in circumstances which absolutely forbid you to offer it. In no long time, I believe you will be, by the operation of law, a bishop complete of the English Church. But, whether priest or bishop, you are ecclesiastically bound to withhold from me all charity. With the Church, you cannot evade your covenant. As an honest man, you are bound to look upon me as A DOOMED BEING. You have no discretion. In vain you struggle against the paradox and horror of 'wielding against me the terrors of the invisible world.' The kindness of your heart, the liberality of your mind, the softening influences of study, must not speak. All were put to silence at the time you 'set your hand' to that formulary of your Church wherein it is declared, and whereby you acknowledged, that the doctrine it propounds must be held and believed by me, on pain of 'everlasting perishing.' There are clauses at the beginning, the middle and the end of that formulary which cut off every avenue to escape! I will not offend or pain you by naming what Milton said of the man who 'subscribes.' I will not resort to the cutting sarcasm of Gibbon in reference to the same subject. But there that formulary, and there those clauses, are; and so long as you remain in professed, much more in ministerial, connection with the Church which imposes them, you are in absolute subjection to them. And not this only, but, in your office of bishop, it will be your deplorable duty to bind on others the galling fetters with which you are bound yourself! It is well that this should be known. It is well that the 'most thinking people' of England should be aroused to this fact. Like other strange things which have slept for centuries, it is well that this thing should at length be forced into open day. Let it be known that a minister of the Church of England—however humane, however enlightened—dare not, without making his tongue a traitor to his hand, speak a hope of salvation to one who, as he believes, on scriptural grounds rejects that creed, and it may be, that the mind of this nineteenth century will not be long in making some suitable reparation to outraged humanity and outraged gospel.



“Is it not thus that the measure of liberality and candour which appears in your ‘Observations on Religious Dissent’ has, under the pressure of circumstances, after all been utterly hid away? In very truth, the spirit of your Church has been too strong for the spirit of your heart. In that tract, when speaking of a Unitarian, you say,—‘Putting him, however, on the same footing precisely of earnest religious zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ on which I should place any other Christian,’ &c. &c. My Lord, you were capable of a defence so long as you took and kept this ground, from which, as a Protestant, no power of your assailants could ever have moved you. Either the Church is to judge for me, or it is not. If it is, Mr. Newman is right, and he has only done that completely which others would do but half. If it is not, *you have abandoned the whole ground to your enemies* in that passage of your letter to Lord John Russell, where you *apologize* for your Protestant consistency, by saying that, ‘If, on any occasion, I have *ventured* to call Unitarians Christians, it is not in that strict sense’ [meaning true sense] ‘in which it belongs to a believer in the divinity and atonement of our Lord,’ [how, indeed, could it?] ‘but in a sense not unlike that in the Liturgy, when we pray for all who *call themselves* Christians, that they may be led into the way of truth.’ On later thoughts, then, they are not strictly Christians, but only call themselves such. So that all the charity we have now to receive is the benefit of your prayer that the mercy of God may be shewn us, in saving us, not *in* our errors, but *from* them! The error remaining, we ‘cannot be saved.’ Truly, my Lord, in more senses than one, this is very sad. For my own part, the prayers of theologians for their opponents are not of that species of benediction I have the slightest anxiety to accept. It used to be the practice at Paul’s Cross to hold forth sermons on charity to the victim who was awaiting the flames. And you have probably a sufficient respect for a former Norri-sian Professor at Cambridge, Dr. Hey, not to be wholly forgetful of that passage in his lectures where he remarks that ‘sometimes, in religious controversy, the solemn duty of prayer has been made the vehicle of detraction.’

"2. But now to recur to that earlier period when you penned your 'Observations on Religious Dissent.' I am there (pp. 19, 20,) accosted in the interlocutory form—and am asked certain questions in defence of my faith. I am far from intending, through the channel in which I am now permitted to address you, to defend my faith. But I may, and do most distinctly, demur to your title to attack it. You are not in a condition to maintain an impartial controversy. Committed before you could think—so we learn from your 'Inaugural Lecture (p. 8), to a 'belief in the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity,' were you ever afterwards in circumstances for a *fair* examination of the truth of that doctrine? '*Pledged in infancy*, by the fostering care of the Church,' when you arrived at 'the mature age of reflection,' in what circumstances were you *then*, to exercise your power of reflection? Would 'the care of the Church' permit you? Would her language, would her forms, would her spirit, encourage or recognize the right to form an independent opinion of your own? Have you never suspected that the process which has determined your mind may, all along, have been simply this:—

'By education most have been misled;  
So they believe, because they so were bred.  
The priest continues what the nurse began;  
And thus the child imposes on the man.'

"In all seriousness, I ask how you can undertake to inform my mind, when you have pledged yourself, not only in infancy, but in manhood, not to inform your own? You will say, perhaps, that your subscription to the sixth Article of the Church, and your Ordination Vow, 'to teach nothing as necessary to salvation, but that *which you shall be persuaded* may be concluded and proved by the Scripture,' give you full latitude to exercise and declare your judgment in relation to Christian truth. And so, indeed, they might seem to do. But mark the condition which follows! No sooner has this noble liberty of prophesying been conceded, than, like a dissolving picture in a show, it is made to give way to this miserable sequel:—'Will you then give your faithful diligence always to minister the doctrine, &c., of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and *as this Church and*

*realm have received the same?* What, now, becomes of the liberty of prophesying? It is all fled—it is all illusion.

‘Ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago  
Par levibus ventis!’

But not only has your infancy been pledged—not only have your baptismal sponsors promised to believe in your name—(a thing no human being could do for another)—and not only has your boyhood been trepanned into subscription to the bewildering theology of the Thirty-nine Articles—if only at the tender age of *twelve years* you had presented yourself for matriculation at Oxford,—for such is the requirement of her statutes, under ‘the fostering care of her favourite’ Laud!—not only have you with this preparation gone into the unprejudiced study of divine truth,—but even now you swear you never *will* believe differently from your present belief; for thus we learn from your Inaugural Lecture:—‘The truths themselves I held then, I hold now, and, so help me God, *will* hold to my life’s end.’ Positively the oath of the late Duke of York had nothing equal to this! That was intolerance in regard to others: this is intolerance over a man’s self. Now, I will not say,—as some in similar cases have said,—it is but right to maintain your opinions, since they maintain you. But this I may be allowed to say, that it is only upon recollection of ‘the fostering care of your Church,’ and especially of your University, I can learn to comprehend how any man could make up his mind it was impossible for him to be more knowing and wise at sixty than he was at thirty,—or, in the short course of threescore years and ten, should presume to say of investigation, and consequently of that knowledge which might be in its train,—‘hitherto shalt thou come and no further.’

“The fact, however, reminds me of what Milton has said, that ‘a man may be a heretic even in the truth;’—and of what Locke has no less appositely said—that ‘He who does not, to the best of his power, exert his discerning faculties [in pursuit of truth], however he may sometimes light on it, is in the right but by chance; and I know not whether the luckiness of the accident will excuse the irregularity of his proceeding.’

“But a word or two more of heresy directly. Meantime the

name of Milton recalls to my attention that passage in your 'Observations' (the only point of doctrine I shall touch), where you ask of Unitarians, 'Why do you take so much pains to convince the world that you do not agree with the mass of professing Christians in believing in the same sense—'One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all'?' charging upon them the responsibility of 'dissenting (*pace* his Lordship of Exeter) from their brethren in the faith, because they will not assent to *their* metaphysical conclusions!' Upon this I have only to remark, that the difference between your metaphysics and mine is simply this,—that I can propound my conclusions in the precise and not very recondite terms of Scripture; while *you*, retrench how you may the dogmatic terminology of the Church, are fain to use such expressions and explications as nowhere occur in Scripture. My language is—'One God, the Father—and one Lord, Jesus Christ.' Your language is—'Perfect God and Perfect Man, in one Person; or, as it is technically expressed, the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union.' (Archd. Hare, p. 21.) Which of us now resorts to metaphysics? Which is the Dogmatist—and which the Scripturian?

"But let us hear Milton, and pass on.

"Referring to those words in Ephesians, Milton, in his posthumous Treatise, translated by Bishop Sumner, applies himself to shew that 'the Father is one, and therefore God is one, in the same sense as the remaining objects of which Unity is predicated, that is, numerically one, therefore also one in person,' &c. &c. 'Though all this be so self-evident,' he continues, 'as to require no explanation . . . it is wonderful with what futile subtleties . . . certain individuals have endeavoured to elude or obscure the plain meaning of these passages . . . as if their object were not to preach the pure truth of the gospel to the poor and simple, but rather *to sustain some absurd paradox from falling*, by the treacherous aid of sophisms and verbal distinctions,' &c.

"It is a singular circumstance, perhaps an inauspicious one, my Lord, that in the course of his liberal defence, Archdeacon Hare has some thirty times used the words 'heresy' and 'heretic'

as something peculiarly horrible—as a sort of ‘*monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens* ;’ and certainly, for all the light he has thrown upon it, the description may be completed—‘*cui lumen ademptum* ;’ and yet has used it with as much assurance as if the ill word never was thrown at himself, and as if the exclusive right of applying it were the inalienable possession of whatever party was numerous, or bold enough, to pelt it at its neighbour. The best definition I have known of it, is that which was furnished by an honest man at least—whom you once knew something of, as I did too—poor Blanco White—‘*Heresy is a word which expresses only the anger of one Christian against another.*’ I would defy Archdeacon Hare to produce a better. And I should strongly recommend him, therefore—the next time he writes a defence of your Lordship—to use this word invariably with a protest.

“In some particulars you have certainly not been happy in your defenders. At p. 161 of his ‘History of the Hampden Controversy,’ the Rev. Henry Christmas, with a gravity perfectly inimitable, gives us to understand that ‘the wisest and most philosophical divines have ever treated Unitarianism, in its varied forms, as a most unphilosophical system—one singularly deficient in clearness and consistency.’

“I had thought that Milton, Locke and Newton—for whose Unitarianism perhaps Mr. Christmas will not insist upon the vouchers—knew something of philosophy! I had thought that Channing, in our own day, might pass muster, even though not an ‘F.R.S.,’ and only denoted by a Southey as ‘an honour to his generation and his country.’ But it seems I was mistaken, and that all the philosophy belongs of right to the father of the Baconian system, of whom, whether in sincerity or not, it was a maxim in so many words laid down, that ‘the more ABSURD and INCREDIBLE any divine mystery is, the greater honour we do God in believing it, and so much the more noble the victory of FAITH.’ The which his annotator (Shaw) observing, adds, in a note,—‘On the foundation here laid down, it cannot appear *incredible* that the author should write the characteristics of a believing Christian ; for he is here expressing that reason and faith

are opposites.' But in this, what more was Bacon than a plagiarist; for had not the wise and philosophic Tertullian before him declared, 'I believe because it is IMPOSSIBLE'? And, moreover, who can doubt on whose side the philosophy and 'the CLEARNESS and CONSISTENCY' are, when the Church has its SOUTH to contend that 'things may be adored under their character of mysteries, which would otherwise be EXPLODED AS CONTRADICTIONS;' and its HURDS to accept, in apparent sincerity, of things 'at which REASON STANDS AGHAST, and Faith herself is half confounded'? Alas, what chance, indeed, has Unitarianism in the arena with such combatants as these!

"My Lord, it is more than time that I should have done. I have endeavoured to vindicate myself with frankness, but not, let me hope, with disrespect. I have lamented, and shall continue to lament, on very different grounds from those of other observers, the position in which you are now and have for a series of years been placed. You have aimed—*I trust, without success*—to stimulate your hearers to the free study of the Holy Scriptures. (Hare, p. 22.) You undertake the same for yourself, by your episcopal vows. It is a hazardous, a painful, a cruel, a vain attempt! You cannot fight in the field of immortal truth, bowed down with the unwieldy armour and the uncouth implements with which you enter the conflict. ANOTHER HARE has spoken, whom it would be well to take into your counsels. In his 'Difficulties and Discouragements in the Study of the Scriptures in the way of Private Judgment,' he has left a legacy of which 'the wisest and most philosophic divines'—if they would value their peace, their comfort, their credit and their livings—cannot too diligently or abundantly avail themselves. In that work, BISHOP HARE, of Chichester, though dead, yet speaketh.

"In reference to your Lordship in an earlier period of your troubles, it was the prayer of Blanco White, 'May Heaven blind the persecutors sufficiently to commit themselves in a manner that may ALARM THE PEOPLE, in proportion to the magnitude of the evil which they now overlook.' It is the humble aspiration of another,—May the eyes of all be opened who are

the victims of evil institutions, to come out from among them, and do the work of God, unshackled by the fear, unbought by the favour, of man! Better give up all than consistency, principle, integrity.—For ‘What doth it profit a man if he gain the WHOLE WORLD, and lose his own soul?’

“I remain, your faithful servant, and true well-wisher,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG, A.B., T.C.D.

“Clifton, Jan. 31, 1848.”

The editor of the *Examiner*, however, declined publishing this letter, on the plea that it was “too theological.” This refusal disappointed Mr. Armstrong, and drew forth the following reply:

*To the Editor of the (London) Examiner.*

“11, Clifton Vale, Bristol, Feb. 2, 1848.

“Dear Sir,—You have deprived me of a great gratification, and on grounds of which I confess I do not see the force. The Episcopalian theology of this country is *political*; and all the journals, ‘liberal’ and others, have been discussing it for the last three months. From *every* side the words ‘heresy’ and ‘heretic’ come up with the most absolute acquiescence,—it being all the while forgotten or uncared-for that there is a section of fellow-citizens in this country who are the innocent victims of the social infamy inflicted by their use. In their professional resort to these terms, the clergy *have full swing*. Archdeacon Hare scores of times employs it; and yet, while impaling us in this fashion, gets the credit of writing a pamphlet (I quote the *Examiner* of Jan. 1st) ‘profound, subtle, philosophical in the true sense of the word.’

“Now my object, in the letter whose insertion you have thought proper to decline as being too theological for your pages, was to shew both to this Archdeacon and to the ‘martyr’ Bishop, and through your pages to many a snug breakfast-party at Oxford and elsewhere, that in this mimic Popery of theirs (Whigs, Liberals and philosophers though they be), they only deserve to be well laughed at, or shut up in the same sack with the mischievous and ugly creatures whose propensities for harming were not a whit more malignant than their own.

"From theology proper, from a defence of my own faith (unless it might be in one or two brief passages *extorted by the Bishop*, and which might have been omitted had you pleased), I studiously abstained. I am sorry you have not better understood my purpose ;—more sorry still that the political Church of this country, strong by its revenues, its aristocracy, its monopoly, and of course by its numbers, getting in proportion to its already abundance, should be made more strong still by the instrumentality denied to weaker parties for expressing their wrongs and invoking the sympathy of an intelligent public.

"I wrote for no creed. I wrote for the rights of mind ; and I should be glad to know when and how these latter are to be vindicated for the world, and especially for what Milton ('who should be living still') calls 'God's Englishmen,' so long as the foremost of our liberal journals shall be contented to hail even the best of our creed-bound Bishops as among '*thinkers*, not parrots' (*Examiner*, Jan. 1, 1848) ; and the *very* occasional opportunity be denied to those who are prepared to shew with what *curiously adapted* machinery these 'thinkers' for the nation have been prepared and *educated* for that high function ?

"I have the honour to remain, Sir (with all acknowledgment of the flattering terms in which you *admire* what you decline to *insert*), your very faithful servant,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

The same indignation on the want of fair play for Unitarians in the public press breaks out on his reading the following opinion of the *Standard* on their merits, quoted in the *Examiner* of 12th March, 1853. He copies the passage into his journal and adds a characteristic comment :

"'What is a Unitarian?' Discussing Sir William Molesworth's speech on the Clergy Reserves Bill, the *Standard* shortly answers Lord Eldon's once famous question. 'Now surely neither he nor his Canadian assistants or informants will tell us that Unitarians belong to any denomination of Christians. *All the world knows that, properly speaking, the array under these colours can only be designated as uncircumcised Mahomedans.*



They form part of the great power that the beloved apostle St. John,—authority superior to either Hincks or Molesworth,—said was to come into this world to plague it, and which, as a portion of antichrist, denied the divinity of our Saviour.' Bravo! Mr. Editor of the *Standard*. The man in the bronze mask! Will he venture to be honest for five minutes, or for five inches of his bigot columns, just to hear what a Unitarian has to say in reply? Not he in sooth. He knows a trick worth two of this."

Sunday, March 16, 1851, he writes in his journal: "Considerable interest evinced by friends in the vestry in the case of 'Church persecution' of Mr. Gilbert, a minister in Sussex, stated in a short and able leader of the *Inquirer* to-day.\* An

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\* The following is the letter which appeared in the *Inquirer*, on which the leading article was founded:

"Having determined to proceed as a settler to New Plymouth, New Zealand, where there are several Unitarian families, and where I hope to establish myself in a sphere of usefulness and provide for myself and family, I am induced, by the advice of the Rev. J. P. Malleon and several kind-hearted friends, to make an appeal through the *Inquirer*, as well as by private application, to the benevolent among the Unitarian body.

"Educated among the Calvinists (my grandfather being for sixty years a preacher among the Independents at Heathfield, Sussex), it was a matter of severe disappointment to my relatives that I should become a Unitarian; and I have since been, in very many difficulties, deprived of their sympathy and support.

"At Northiam, in Sussex, I was a minister for nine years, where, with a very small salary, I maintained an honourable position by keeping a school, until driven out of the parish by the determined opposition of the clergyman, who, in explanation of his (I hope unusual) conduct towards me, wrote me a note, in which the following passage occurs: 'I assure you that I do not and cannot entertain the slightest feelings of opposition to you as a man; but as a Unitarian, and one whom they have chosen to be their minister,—and therefore to do, in my opinion, what will ruin the immortal souls of the people over whom, as a shepherd, I am appointed to watch,—I hold that I should be in the highest degree criminal in the sight of Christ, my Master, not to exert every faculty in neutralizing or destroying the power you may possess against them for harm.'

"Unfortunately this was no mere threat. Without going into particulars, I was compelled, by the ruin of my school, to seek another congregation and home.

"I removed to Ditchling, Sussex, in 1841. In 1846, I succeeded in establishing a school at Hurstpierpoint, three miles from my chapel, and was enabled to support my family respectably for three years, until a similar opposition on the part of the parish clergyman was again exercised against me. This gentleman endeavoured in every way to bring my school into discredit on account of my religious opinions, and actually brought into the village, and paid, a person £52 per annum to attempt to destroy, as he acknowledged, the 'baneful effects of my Unitarian poison on the minds of the parishioners.' This, however, did not

unexpected opportunity placed it in my power most gladly to contribute a guinea as my mite towards the compensation of this cruelly aggrieved man, whose only crime consisted in teaching grammar while holding, without imparting in the process of conjugating and declining, the Unitarian tenets he had derived from his study of the Scriptures!"

Mr. Armstrong's sympathy, however, did not end with a pecuniary contribution. That same night he wrote the following letter to Mr. Roebuck:

"11, Clifton Vale, Bristol, March 16, 1851.

"Sir,—I cannot lay my head on my pillow to-night without relieving a weight which lies on my heart by writing a line to you. I do so, because I believe you are a fearless as well as a truthful man; and where a grievance is felt, you have the disposition, as few men have the equal power, to lay open its cause,

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succeed. But the establishment of a Puseyite school for the middle class, numbering nearly two hundred boys, has effectually ruined my school, and left me but £52 a-year (my congregational income) to maintain my family. In these circumstances of repeated opposition and a life of antagonism—hateful beyond expression to me—and with a large family, I have determined to emigrate.

"I am thankful to say I have sufficient property to pay every claim against me, and to meet the expenses of the transit to New Plymouth. But I am informed by those who know the colony, and the difficulties of emigration generally, that I ought on my landing to have a sum at my command of not less than £250 to save my family from very severe hardship, and give myself a reasonable chance of ultimate success. My present congregation have, I am proud to say, proved themselves devotedly attached to me; but belonging, as they do, to the trading and agricultural interest, and suffering from the pressure of the times, it is but little they can raise for me as a memorial of respect; yet that has been freely and without solicitation given. . . . .

"I am, Sir, &c. &c.,

THOMAS GILBERT."

A very interesting account of the details of this wicked act of persecution will be found in the *Christian Reformer* for 1851, p. 379. The writer concludes with the two following queries:

"1. In our moral estimate of nations, how far is conscientiousness to be admitted as a full and valid excuse for not mere exclusiveness, but a haughty, insulting, cruel intolerance, leading to acts of what all but itself calls the most hateful persecution? Is the conscientiousness, the self-delusion—an exculpation, as some would have it, or only an alleviation?

"2. Is not the Church of England echargeable with having reduced our village districts to a state of such awful vassalage? If genuine, *conscientious* Church-of-England men had their way, what *crumb* of the children's bread, what rag of the banner of liberty, would be left? Yet is said, Why do not you Unitarians turn out and fight for the Church of England against the Pope?"

and direct the public attention to the wilful instruments by which it may appear to be inflicted. The occasion which draws forth these remarks is described in the leading article of the *Inquirer* newspaper of the 15th ult., which I send by same post with this.

“There is not a Protestant platform in England which has not lately rung with apostrophes to glorious freedom and all that, as contrasted with the slavery and tyranny inseparable from Romanism.\*

“And yet see what may be done even now, in the name of that ‘glorious freedom,’ by men whom Englishmen are taught to look up to as the teachers of their religion and the leaders of their civilization. But have not men a right and a duty connected with their impressions and convictions of religious truth? To be sure they have? But, like all other rights and duties,—without prejudice to the equal rights and duties of other parties. But is an English parson not bound to banish and drive away strange doctrines contrary to God’s word? Yes! But in the name of God, let God’s word be the standard; and the ‘driving away’ be the just result of the calm and temperate appeal he makes to the understanding, and not to the *passions* and *fears*, of the people whom he desires to preserve or recal from error. Anything else is but the ‘*persequar* and *impugnabo*’ which has been cast in the teeth of Archbishop Wiseman.

“I would to God I had a seat in the British Senate, that I might uphold this truth in the face of all men, and make the ears of the bigots tingle, whether in or out of doors. As it is, I and those who feel and suffer with me have to place ourselves in the hands of those generous men who are the most likely to sympathize in our wrongs, and the most able to redress them.

“To you, Sir, therefore I now appeal. According to the doctrine of Burke, you are *my* representative in the Commons’ House, as well as that of the men of Sheffield. As an Englishman, therefore, I place this case in your hands, whenever opportunity may occur in the House for referring to it, not as

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\* 1851, the year of the Papal aggression.

*personal* absolutely to myself, but as affecting the fair and free exercise of a religion which is dear and holy to me, and as a brother minister of a cruelly injured and virtuous man. If it may be agreeable to you to know further who and what I am, allow me to refer to my old friend Mr. Sharman Crawford, and to Mr. James Heywood, M.P., who knows me very well.

"I have the honour to remain, Sir, very faithfully, &c.

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG (Clerk)."

In the year 1853, a jubilee meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society was held in Bristol, with a special view to interest young men in the effort to send a million copies of the New Testament to China. The great lion on the occasion was the popular platform orator, the Rev. Canon Stowell, who in the course of his speech, forgetting the unsectarian character of the Society he represented, and the sole object for which this meeting "of all friends of the Bible" had been called together, wantonly and gratuitously travelled out of his way to attack Unitarian opinions, calling those who professed them "infidels" and "enemies of the word of God." Mr. James, one of the ministers of Lewin's-Mead chapel, who was present by invitation, together with the young men of his congregation who took an interest in the subject, at the close of Mr. Stowell's address, rose to complain of the violation of the Rules of the Bible Society by that gentleman, and to protest against the introduction of controversial theology at a meeting of an Association which included persons of various religious communions. The Chairman, however, decided that Mr. Stowell's proceedings were in perfect accordance with the Rules of the Bible Society, and that Mr. James could not be heard. The majority of the persons present had, however, already settled that part of the question by drowning Mr. James' voice in their hisses !\*

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\* Miss Martineau, in her *History of the Thirty Years' Peace*, makes some observations on the death of that remarkable man, Rajah Rammohun Roy, which are brought forcibly to my mind by this circumstance. "He became a Christian and gloried—till he came to England—in the liberty and liberality secured, as he believed, by that faith. . . . He arrived in England in 1831. . . . The impressible Hindoo could not recognize the Christianity he had learned and so dearly loved amidst the pretensions of the Tractarians, and the ascetism of the Evangelicals,

On the following Sunday, Mr. Armstrong referred to this occurrence, in the course of his sermon, in the following words:

"In the unaffected desire to honour a celebration of the Bible Society,—in pursuance of the unquestioned right, accorded by the principles of that Society, to be present in person, and aiding in effort, for the promotion of its common object,—one of your ministers took his place, but a few nights since, on the open platform where its free principles were to be avowed and its noble aims to be enforced. The sequel proved that he was only there to be insulted and maligned. The dearest principles of his soul, the most sacred convictions of his heart, were rudely wounded; and surrounding—alas! that I should say it—applauding multitudes were gathered, to hear him denounced as an infidel to God and an enemy to man! The worm will turn when trodden on, and one of the meekest of spirits was fain to offer some words of earnest protest and much-needed elucidation. The priesthood of Bristol, and their people aiding them, would not give him a hearing. And *he* had to sit down or retire, who *alone* in all that assembly had the intelligence to understand, or the spirit and will to vindicate, the real principles of that outraged

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and the wrath of the Irish Protestants, and the tumult of the Irish Catholics, and the conflicts between the Church and the Dissenters, and the widening split in the Scotch Church, and the profane antics of the Irvingites. He went to hear all within his reach—he was ready with sympathy for all who were not angry or proud—he poured out his wonder and sorrow at what he saw, and he wasted day by day. . . . He sank at the first touch of illness, resigning himself to the Hindoo observances desired by his attendants, and was laid—not among any of the Christians whose strifes had so chilled and wounded his hope and heart—but alone, among the trees of a private garden belonging to the mansion where he died. It is not in our time, as it once was, that the heathen say as they look thoughtfully on,—‘See how these Christians love one another!’ Rammohun Roy found the religious world in England very far indeed, from even the view of one of her own Churchmen,—‘to insist strongly on the difference between Christian and Non-Christian, and to sink into nothing the differences between Christian and Christian.’”—Pp. 408, 409, ed. 1858.

Again, John Stuart Mill, in his work "On Liberty," just published, says (p. 76), "When their enemies said, 'See how these Christians love one another' (a remark not likely to be made by anybody now), they assuredly had a much livelier feeling of the meaning of their creed than *they have ever had since*. And to this cause probably it is chiefly owing that Christianity now makes so little progress in extending its domain, and after eighteen centuries is still nearly confined to Europeans and the descendants of Europeans."

Bible Society, and, with it, the equally outraged principles of every Protestant man.

"It was intended to be a great celebration and enforcement of the PROTESTANT cause. It ended as a triumph and rejoicing to every Romanist who should hear of its shame, and bear witness to its failure and its folly. . . . .

"Other watchmen have gone to sleep,—the towers of Zion have been betrayed; be it yours, through the grace of God, and in the faith of Jesus,—for your own sakes, your children's sakes, your ministers' sakes, your church's sake, your God and Saviour's sake,—to come to their rescue, and transmit unimpaired the sacred and social liberties, which alone make your country worth the having, and your worship worth preserving."

Mr. James defended himself and his proceeding at the meeting in an able letter to the Chairman, Mr. Budgett, and delivered a lecture on the "Claims of Unitarians to be treated as Friends of the Bible," in Lewin's-Mead chapel. This lecture drew a large crowd to hear it; and a characteristic letter written by Mr. Armstrong to invite me to be present at a repetition of it, will give a good idea of the excitement it occasioned:

"Durdham Park, October 27, 1853.

"My dear H.,—Jubilate! We are in an orthodox row here. The whole city, like Ephesus of old, in a commotion, and the worshipers who side with Demetrius all in a flame of alarm for their craft. I send you a 'Mercury'\* to tell you all about 'Diana.' The immediate result was such an overflowing at Lewin's Mead on Sunday evening last, as Jenny Lind never produced at Covent Garden or wherever else she sang. It is said two thousand people were there, and hundreds went away unable to obtain admittance.

"Mr. James, you will see, was the aggrieved party, at least was personally the object of the orthodox onslaught, at a Bible Society (!) meeting, and admirably well he sustained his part. His harangue, or lecture, in defence of Unitarians is to be repeated next Sunday evening, and I write this to ask you to come

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\* A Bristol newspaper so called.

here on Saturday. You shall hear a quiet, tranquillizing sermon from me in the morning of Sunday, and I hope make one of another large crowd, if not so prodigious a one as on Sunday last, in the evening. . . . Yours, &c., "G. A."

Mr. Armstrong proceeded, in connection with his colleague Mr. James, and some gentlemen belonging to their congregation, to make further efforts for redress from the parent Society in London, whose Rules had been so grossly violated; but a few of the replies to a voluminous correspondence on the subject, which I have found among my friend's papers, will prove that in this instance, as in most others of a like kind, the weaker party was treated to little else than shuffling excuses by the stronger. One honourable exception I will refer to first.

*To the Dean of Bristol.*

"Durdham Park, Dec. 1, 1853.

Rev. Sir,—I take the liberty of enclosing to you a printed document, though it may possibly have already reached you, in order to assure myself of your being fully informed of some painful occurrences therein referred to and explained, and which only now await the verdict of an enlightened public, guided and informed by influential and honest men, and, we could earnestly wish, by the wise and upright ministers and teachers too of all religious denominations.

"With a view to aiding in this object, it is intended that a deputation, composed of members of various religious bodies, Members of Parliament and others, should proceed to London on an early day for the purpose of waiting on the parent British and Foreign Bible Society; and I further herewith transmit for your inspection—may I hope for your entire approval—an outline of the probable nature of the questions which the deputation will be authorized to place before that body, and the explanations and guarantees they may deem themselves entitled to require.

"With such materials for the guidance of your judgment, and in the recollection of the distinguished liberality and amiable bearing which have governed your public conduct, and, I have no doubt, live in your private thoughts, in regard to the common

rights of all professors of the Christian name in this free and Protestant realm, allow me to hope that your good wishes, and so far as possible your personal aid, will not be wanting to us in our efforts to repair a signal injury done to that great Society, over a branch of which your position as Dean of this diocese assigns you the office of a Vice-president.

“May I respectfully ask you to consider whether in holding that office you can, upon full knowledge of the facts, silently permit a violation of the fundamental Rules of the Society whose interests and integrity are so far committed to your care? The question suggests an act of justice, of faithfulness, of honour; can it be doubted that Dr. Elliot will have the courage becomingly to discharge the duties which devolve upon him under such circumstances?

“With great respect, I have the honour to remain, Rev. Sir,  
your obedient servant, “G. A.”

A permission to publish this correspondence, granted to Mr. Armstrong in a subsequent letter, enables me to add the Dean's reply:

“Deanery, December 19th, 1853.

“Reverend Sir,—I very sincerely regret that mischance has occasioned so long an interval to elapse before I could answer your letter. . . .

“I was not in Bristol at the time of the jubilee meeting, and I do not to this hour know what Mr. Stowell said. I as little know what was the manner of the Chairman's interposition, against which Mr. James protests. I was not aware until I read his pamphlet that there had been any meeting of the Bristol Committee, and, consequently, could not be acquainted with any resolution which it had adopted.

“In answer to your appeal to me as one of the Vice-presidents of the Society, I can therefore say nothing with any degree of precision as to what took place in the Broadmead Rooms. I cannot, however, have the slightest hesitation in stating that, as far as I understand the Constitution and Rules of the Society, the Unitarian is as much entitled to be a member of the body generally, or of its committees, as the Trinitarian. I do not



find that it makes any distinction whatever between them. Under such circumstances, I could not but judge that any member who should *give umbrage to the one opinion or to the other* would transgress alike against the spirit and the letter of the institution.

"I have already said that I do not know what the Chairman said or did; I can, consequently, only say what I should have done under like circumstances.

"I should have called upon any member speaking on the platform of the Society to desist from any tone or line of remark which I might have considered inconsistent with its avowed spirit and Constitution. But I certainly should have also interfered to prevent an answer which could only have provoked irrelevant controversy and unseemly heats of debate.

"If I have read the past history of the Society aright, I do not doubt that the memorial to which you allude will obtain the answer you desire.

"For my own part, I trust very sincerely that the Society will not consent in the least possible degree to narrow the ground on which it at present stands.

"I am, Rev. Sir, your faithful servant,

"GILBERT ELLIOTT."

*To the Earl of Shaftesbury.*

"Durdham Park, Redland, near Bristol,

"March 21, 1854.

"My Lord,—As President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, I beg leave to direct your attention to a case which I apprehend you will regard as one entitled to some official or authoritative notice. Your Lordship must be fully aware of the signally defeated attempt which was made in 1831 to introduce a theological test as a qualification for membership in the British and Foreign Bible Society; and it may not be superfluous to remind you of the marked attention requested in the Annual Reports of the Society for 1831 and 1832, pp. 99 and 83 respectively, to an extract from its Eighth Report, expressive of its earnest desire that, *on the part of all auxiliary Societies*, adherence with the utmost strictness to the simple principle of

the institution, viz., the distribution of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment, should be maintained; and that one correct line of operation should continue to characterize the whole body.' It is in virtue of these facts—namely, the purely catholic constitution of the Bible Society,—the equality, thereby, of all religious denominations on its platforms, and the admonitorial power thus properly assumed over all its auxiliaries, that I now, my Lord, invoke your judgment on the occurrences indicated in the printed pages, Nos. 1 and 2, herewith enclosed.

"To the principles above referred to, the position of your Lordship as President of the British and Foreign Bible Society would seem to imply your sincere and unreserved adhesion. And it may reasonably be presumed that, in case of any violation of those principles,—should redress or apology or reassurance for the future, on full knowledge of the same, be refused by the lower authorities,—the position so held by your Lordship would not be regarded by you as simply honorary, but as implying and demanding some adequate power for the correction of mistake or the repression of abuse.

"My Lord, this case has been brought under the notice of the Committee of the parent Society, who have refused to entertain it or to hear the parties aggrieved. A wrong has been committed, but no remedy is offered. A great public institution has been wounded in its most vital part, and no healing hand has as yet been lifted up. Anniversary meetings will soon be held, and credit will be taken in the face of the world by the Society over which you preside, for loyalty to its engagements as well as success in its undertakings. The name of the Most High will be adjured, the Divine blessing will be taken for granted, the word of truth will be committed to proceedings put forth to the world as 'sincere and without offence,' 'without partiality and without hypocrisy,' the religious crowd will depart, believing, confiding, edified,—and this sacrifice of insincerity will be completed to the shame and pain of all true men, and the real disservice of God's work upon earth, unless a better will should prompt your Lordship, in the present as in other concerns of humanity, to inter-

pose your wise, healing, and righteous counsels. Do I repose an ungrounded confidence in that better spirit to which I appeal?

"Awaiting your Lordship's decision, I remain, respectfully, your faithful and obedient servant,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG (Clerk),

One of the Ministers of Lewin's-Mead chapel, Bristol."

*The Earl of Shaftesbury to Rev. George Armstrong.*

"March 24, 1854.

"Sir,—The situation which I have the honour to fill as President of the Bible Society is, as you rightly judge, one not only of honour, but of duty.

"The question brought before me in the letter which I have just received requires much deliberation; but I am decidedly of opinion that, in the case stated, the parent Committee acted with discretion. Local committees and local meetings have never been controlled by instructions from London; they would, I doubt not, greatly resent any such interference on our part.

"I am, sir, your very obedient servant,

"SHAFTESBURY."

*To the Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Manchester.*

"Bristol, March 20, 1854.

"My Lord,—Under the circumstances which I shall state with as much brevity as I can, I take the liberty of addressing you as one of the Vice-presidents of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"Of the history and Constitution of that Society, I am to assume that your Lordship is thoroughly informed; and I have but simply to remind you of the discussions which took place respecting the latter in the year 1831, as stated in the Annual Report of that year. A more distinct repudiation of a Trinitarian test, whether attempted in a direct or indirect form, it would be impossible to imagine. It may be observed that, in the Annual Reports of 1831 and 1832, pp. 99 and 83 respectively (I know not whether in any others), a marked attention is requested to an extract from the Society's Eighth Report, expressive of its earnest desire that, *on the part of all auxiliary*

*Societies*, 'adherence with the utmost strictness to the simple principle of the institution, viz., the distribution of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment,' should be maintained; 'and that one correct line of operation should continue to characterize the whole body.'

"And now, my Lord, side by side with these facts,—the strictly catholic principle of the Bible Society, and the moral control (at least to the extent of counsel) it justly assumes over all its auxiliaries,—allow me very earnestly to solicit your Lordship's deliberate judgment on the occurrences indicated in the printed pages, marked Nos. 1 and 2, herewith enclosed.

"In regard to these occurrences, I am to state that as yet the violation of its fundamental Rules thus openly committed (although formally brought under its notice), has met with no check or reproof whatever from the executive authorities of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In effect, a theological test has been introduced; the Constitution of the Society has been abrogated; and any Unitarian minister, however zealously affected in behalf of its object (as in the present instance has been most remarkably the case), must appear henceforth on the platform of the Bible Society in fear and trembling lest he should be insulted by some zealot who should make use of that platform to denounce his tenets and deny his claim to the Christian name.

"In such circumstances, it remains to inquire, Will the higher authorities look silently on? And has the sober part of the Christian public no hope of the healing intervention of such persons as your Lordship, in whom it would recognize the enlightened representatives of all that is most dignified in the Church as well as most estimable in individual character?

"Very respectfully I would suggest that, as an officer of the British and Foreign Bible Society, it would be rendering but suitable justice to the injured parties, and, *what is of far more importance*, suitable service to the great Society whose character has been thus compromised, were your Lordship to submit this representation to the Committee of the parent Society; and to take some means of providing that, in the course of the approaching anniversary proceedings, some caution should be

administered against the recurrence of irregularities so painful in their nature and so injurious in their consequences.

"I have the honour to remain, my Lord, very faithfully your obedient servant,  
" G. A. (Clerk)."

*The Bishop of Manchester to the Rev. George Armstrong.*

"The Bishop of Manchester has to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Armstrong's letters and enclosures.

"The Bishop deeply regrets that any circumstance should have occurred to disturb the harmony of a meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as stated at Bristol. As, however, he has never mixed in any discussion relative to the Constitution of the Society, and joined it under an express and full understanding that it was not his intention to do so with the late Secretary, Mr. Brandrum, he does not feel disposed to enter on the question referred to in Mr. Armstrong's letter.

"Sedgeley, Manchester, March 23, 1854."

Mr. Armstrong writes again in reply :

"The Rev. George Armstrong begs leave to acknowledge the honour of the Bishop of Manchester's answer to his recent communication on the subject of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"In doing so, he may be pardoned for expressing his equal concern and surprise that such a compact as that stated by the Bishop could have been entered into between two honest and, as the world would suppose, pious men.

"The setting-up of *a name* in front of a great institution in order to attract the confidence of a public which would naturally associate therewith the moral influence and personal approval of its bearer, in regard to the character, object, and upright management of such institution, with an understanding that nothing of the kind was really meant, is an arrangement rather beyond the power of an ordinary moralist to comprehend. And that the name of the Bishop of Manchester was, upon his own confession, only given as a make-believe, adds a peculiarly painful, because unexpected, evidence of the pious frauds which may still be enacted in the name and on behalf of religion and the Bible.

"In the mean time, it may possibly be a satisfaction to the Bishop of Manchester that this disavowal of responsibility and refusal of redress affect only a very small body in the religious world. Were Unitarians as avowedly as they are really numerous, politicians, Churchmen, and friends of the Bible, might be induced to think it was worth the while to do justice. As it is, the Bible Society, its patrons and *managers*, can afford to soar above such considerations. Though their institution is dishonoured, it is only through the sides of a weak minority ; and 'small sins' may be as complacently compounded for in a corporate as they too often are in a private conscience.

"A great man, Edmund Burke, once said, 'he would not throw the people so much as a kitling to torment.' Under the humane care of Bishops and Committees, Unitarians, it would seem, do not fare quite so well.

"Durdham Park, Redland, near Bristol,

"March 25, 1854."

The following letter, containing Mr. Armstrong's opinions on the connection of Church and State, will be an appropriate pendant to the foregoing correspondence :

*To the Rev. W. J. Cross, Clifton Vale.*

"October 14, 1854.

"Dear Sir,—I have been favoured with your communication of the 11th inst., and beg to say I should gladly have availed myself of the obliging invitation it conveys to meet the London deputation from the 'Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control,' at the Montague Hotel on Wednesday morning next, did the state of my health admit of my leaving home. Having, however, been confined to the house by a tedious cold for two or three weeks past, I dare hardly hope for my own 'liberation' on so early a day as Wednesday next. Nevertheless, I hope my colleague, the Rev. Wm. James, will be present at your meetings, as I should be glad that our testimony should be given not only to the object but the spirit of your proceedings. We hail with thankfulness every occasion of *united* endeavour among the diversities of the Christian world in behalf

of objects in which all have a common interest and are bound by a common duty. It removes for a season those barriers which habitually separate individuals and societies, and chiefly testify to the zeal with which they can cultivate the unamiable rather than the amiable side of the religious profession.

“With reference to the objects of the Society to which your communication refers, I can only generally say that I strongly approve of them. So long as the State extends political and social favour and prestige to the profession of any one set of sharply-defined theological opinions, it does all it can to make religion a sham—to secularize the conscience—to arrest the progress of the general mind—and to superinduce upon the too natural tendencies to religious estrangement and hatred, the insulting pretensions of worldly pride and personal assumption. What worse evil could be in a Christian community? Instead of blessing, doubly cursing, by the passions it engenders, on the one hand in those who inflict, on the other in those who suffer, this most irritating and humiliating of social distinctions; in fine, introducing into the heart of the Christian Church what a heathen had sense enough to deprecate as the worst of evils in a State— ‘*Qui autem (says Cicero) parti civium consulunt, partem negligunt, rem perniciosissimam in civitatem inducunt—seditionem atque discordiam.*’ The only point on which I should probably differ from some of your friends would be the stringency with which they would exclude the aid of the State in the work of national education. Conducted in the religious department of this great work, on the use of the Scriptures, but on the *impartial* principle of abstinence from all *doctrinal* inculcation, catechetical or oral, as professed by the fundamental Rules of the British and Foreign School Society, and sustained by the admirable machinery of inspection and the pupil-teacher system. In such aid, I own, I can see nothing but pure benefit,—certainly, the largest attainable benefit for this whole Protestant, but still most ignorant nation. That this system is practicable, I can testify by the experience of many years in the management of large British schools in connection with my own congregation; and that it has ever failed, has been owing to the lamentable want of principle and breach of faith

on the part of those who have undertaken to administer it,—as witness the speech of Lord Brougham in the House of Lords on the evening of August 4th last.

“I should wish the country at large to be taxed for the support of a national education thus far ‘religious,’ and no farther; for whatsoever is more than this cometh of the lust to make one man pay for what he deems another man’s errors,—and as between the weaker sects and the sect established by law, would tend to the injurious augmentation of an influence already sufficiently overbearing. With this reservation, which I feel I have but very imperfectly placed before you,—but of whose nature and importance I could much wish your distinguished visitor, Mr. Miall, to have some tolerable comprehension,—and apologizing for the length of these written thoughts, which my necessary absence must prevent my offering in person, I beg to remain, &c.,

“G. A.”

Mr. Armstrong, like his favourite John Locke, considered politics a branch of moral philosophy, and as such an important part of the studies of a minister of religion. The history of the rise and fall of empires and the science of government were among his most congenial pursuits, and he was “always young for liberty.”\* He was wont, too much perhaps for the exigencies of practical life, to look at politics from an abstract point of view, and was little disposed, when he considered a great principle at stake, to admit any excuse for the absence of a vigorous pursuit of it to all its logical consequences, wherever they might lead. As we have seen, his nature was essentially emotional, every chord of his heart vibrating to its core at the slightest appearance of injustice or violation of the “rights of man.” He was fond of quoting the famous passage from the American Declaration of Inde-

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\* “One evening during this period (the French Revolution of 1830) a graduate called upon him. ‘Well, Mr. —’ said he, with an accent of sarcasm which few, probably, ever heard from his lips, ‘are you too *so old* and *so wise*, like the other young men at Harvard, as to have no foolish enthusiasm to throw away upon the heroes of the Polytechnic school?’ ‘Sir,’ answered —, ‘you seem to me to be the only young man I know.’ ‘Always young for liberty, I trust,’ replied Dr. Channing, with a bright smile and a ringing tone, as he pressed him warmly by the hand.”—Memoir of Channing, Vol. III. p. 306.



pendence as a summary of his principles: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever a government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." I have sometimes thought he was too hasty in his condemnation of statesmen who seemed to him to fall short of his standard of integrity and truth, and among his papers I have found some rather intolerant invectives against the public men of the day who could not live in the high latitudes of thought which were his natural atmosphere. Theoretical politicians should remember that the failure of a measure brings but little blame to them, while it falls heavily upon the Minister who carries or supports it. It is an awful responsibility to act and think with the fate of a whole nation trembling in the balance, and allowance should be made for the men in power if they falter a little as they tread so narrow a path skirting so terrible an abyss. Still if I differ occasionally from his judgments, I can never differ from the impulses which prompted them, nor from the generous enthusiasm which coloured all his thoughts. Of his own estimate of the solemn importance of the statesman's duty, the following extract from one of his sermons will give an illustration:

"In considering the obstructions to the progress of Christianity in the world, the mind can hardly fail to be directed in its reviews to those leading institutions among nations which have had undoubtedly, and indeed unavoidably, an active and prevailing influence over the intellect, the morals and the manners of the people placed within the sphere of their operation. When we look to the influence of such causes on the happiness and character of the human race, one cannot but think with a feeling of amazement and awe on the position of responsibility assumed by fellow-creatures who undertake to originate and apply, in any spirit short of devout meditation and holy care, agencies of such appalling might; or touch with unhesitating hand the

springs which are to set in motion so much of weal or woe to countless generations of thinking and immortal beings !”

But of all failings in the character of those who pretended to lead the opinions of the people and develop the institutions of the State, none excited his indignation so much as indifference, or want of “thoroughness,” to use his own expression. “There is a fallacy,” he says in one of his public addresses, “which has of late found favour even with reflecting and benevolent minds. From the serene retirement of their own thoughts, they look out upon the tumults and disorders of the world around, and seeing foremost the miseries and the mischiefs which flow from the theological passions of sect against sect, of man against man, and nation against nation, forthwith their charity, or, if they be very profound, their philosophy, is sent out, like the dove from the ark, over these waters of strife, on its errand of peace ; and words of apology and piety take wing, assuring us that we have nothing to alarm and little to lament. ‘True,’ they will say, ‘society is in trouble about these matters, and individuals, alike with communities, worry and devour each other about what is true and what is not ; one asserting one thing and another holding to a different. But never mind. These, after all, are only the *mistakes* about religion. Men are saying and doing all these foolish and wicked things only about the shadows of things, while they are really agreed in the substance. And though they *do* hate, defame, denounce and punish, they are all the while meaning the same thing, if they could only understand one another ; and God is accepted as the common Father, and human happiness the common end,—only they are, unhappily, kept asunder by subordinate and accidental differences.’ In fine, ‘the substance being the one thing needful, why need we trouble ourselves about the shadow ?’

“The answer appears to be obvious. Just because these *shadows* are so very mischievous ! And just because the mistakes being put aside,—like the smoke of a fusillade in some unfortunate rencontre between parties of the same side,—men would be able to see they had been fighting against brothers, and had much better shake hands, and henceforth proceed, in real earnest

and real love, in prosecution of their common weal and their common end. Therefore, while we have charity for mistake, we have none at all for indifference, holding as we do that, as in the days of old, 'the devising of idols was the beginning of spiritual estrangement, and the invention of them the corruption of life,—so now a false worship is the invariable antecedent and support of false maxims in morals and in policy, in private character and in public law. In a word, if truth be the straightest line between the mind and its true good, they cannot be the friends of their kind who depreciate her value and withhold their contributions from her service."

And preaching on "Idols," he thus incidentally refers to some of the evils of the political world which they are often made to sanction. The period, December, 1848, will explain some of the allusions.

"It will not be unprofitable to advert to one species of idol, which, in this our own day and over vast surfaces of the world, exercises a marked and perilous influence,—I mean the idolatry which is developed in the worship of words,—what Lord Bacon calls 'the idol of the forum.'

"There are three words now used, which in national life occupy the whole area of the world's worship, and represent the whole essence and pressure of the power under which the nations live, or try to live,—Constitution, Order, Union.

"In the name of this last, to give stability to laws, as is alleged, there is not a provision or a clause in the whole compass of the Ten Commandments which is not trampled under foot. And that man may reign from Canada to Florida, God is pushed from his throne, and the spirit and mission of his Son wrested into impious connivance at the wickedness and cruelty enacted in his name.

"In the name of the second, blood has been spilt like water, and a universal paralysis—here introduced by naked force alone—there the issue of force in alliance with the falsified forms of liberty—represent the decrepit and ghastly life of all but a fraction of the great European community.

"While, in fine, under the name of the first,—under the

name of 'Constitution,' and leaning on the horns of that altar of all that is civilly sacred to Englishmen—are we not habitually the victims, have we not been lately the spectators of things done, and, under a continuance of the same causes, likely to be done, which might cause, and ought to cause, every ear to tingle and every cheek to burn?

"The Constitution periodically calls for the exercise of that which an English statesman has described as 'the greatest trust which can be vested in mortal hands.' A moral trust therefore, a religious trust, a holy trust. Yet how does 'Constitution' provide that it shall be exercised? Under conditions which, to multitudes, make it an act of desperation, or an act of sordidest crime and wickedness! Every species of moral depravity and confusion exhausted for weeks or months together—by the rich upon the poor, by the powerful upon the weak, by the educated upon the ignorant—to filch that to which the holder only has the right. And in failure of filching, then these rich, these powerful, these educated (lamenting the want of 'education' among the constrained or too easily tempted numbers), turning loose upon them all the 'force' that law can give, and all the 'vengeance' that passion can inspire. Nor is this all. For passion is not always confined to one side. The multitude have their passions too; and because Constitution pretends the act required must be seen, the decision given must be known, therefore force and tumult, blood and slaughter, are the ordeal through which must pass the 'free-born' martyr, the timid, the honest and the quiet, who comes, or wishes to come, to give his voice and serve his country.\* And all this while there are people who go about from house to house and company to company, amusing themselves under the notion that these are necessities or evils to be borne for the greater good, imposed or conferred by that mystic thing, that social 'idol,' which language consecrates under the name of 'Constitution.'

"Now bring this, or bring any idol,—be it 'idol of the forum' or 'idol of the den,' 'idol of the world' or 'idol of the soul within,'

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\* See letter on the Ballot in the Appendix.

the idol which men 'set up in their heart' or 'the stumbling-block of their iniquity put up before their face'—bring any or all of them into presence of the word of God, and, like Satan touched by Ithuriel's spear, the falsehood 'returns of force to its own likeness,' and 'up it starts discovered and surprised.'"

With such views of politics, it will not be matter of surprise that his ardent imagination was excited by, and the sympathies of his heart enlisted in, the cause of the oppressed nationalities and the broken-hearted countries which, wearied with hope deferred, rose in arms against their tyrants in 1848 and 1849. The gallant and holy struggle for their time-honoured rights which the Hungarians waged with their Austrian masters, he watched with the deepest interest.

It will be remembered that the *Times* newspaper took the part of Austria in this struggle, and, in articles full of unenglish feeling and cold scepticism of the cause of liberty, heaped injury and insult upon the martyrs in her cause. Could Mr. Armstrong's pen be still while the "Thunderer" sent its unholy sarcasms through the land? Would he sit silently by while truth was vilified and the convictions of every honest man were outraged? Not he. In the columns of the *Examiner* he found a cordial welcome this time, and many were the noble letters he wrote to the editor in defence of the unhappy and unfortunate, and many the rebukes he administered to the flippant *Times*. I copy one as a specimen :

"THE 'TIMES' AND THE HUNGARIAN QUESTION.

"*To the Editor of the "Examiner."*

"Sir,—The thanks of Englishmen are eminently due to you at a crisis when, to the great European misfortune of the fall of a gallant nation abroad, we have had to endure the added humiliation at home of a sympathy in the cause of the oppressors, of which, since the Tory delirium during the acmé of the first revolutionary period in France, we have had no former example.

"That on English soil and in the English tongue there should have been evidences of so base a spirit as the consecutive articles in the *Times* newspaper on the struggle in Hungary have exhi-

bited,—strange as the idea may seem,—has at least one consolation with it, in the proof it affords—that, in this free country, a man may write anything he pleases, subject only to the liability he incurs of the punishment which opinion or the law will inflict on the wickedness or baseness with which so sacred a privilege may be abused. It is the only consolation of which the case admits. In any other view, the fact is alike disastrous and disgraceful. And it becomes the grave consideration of all that is respectable in England how far our own liberties can be safe, or our national traditions can be held in the honour which is the best guarantee for the rights they transmit to us, if, in the journal which circulates farthest and widest among us, apologies so gross for the stolid despotism, tolerance so palpable for the administrative perfidy, and a spirit so lenient towards the military atrocities, of Austrian rule, should make their daily appearance, and at length have contributed to accomplish the catastrophe which has flung a noble nation under the feet of her barbarous conquerors,—without the stern protest of the fathers, brothers and sons of every educated and intelligent family throughout the length and breadth of this land.

“The *Times* throws discredit on a Kossuth,—but has belief in the virtues of an Austrian Camarilla !

“The *Times* is distrustful of the patriotism of the Magyars, but calls on us to confide in the butchers of Galicia !

“The *Times* dishes up for its readers reports from its own correspondent which might be written at the dictation of the Muscovite, or on a drum-head in the camp of a Haynau,—and yet would have us to believe that the Austrian government over Hungary has been a government ‘by no means adverse to the liberty and progress of the people !’ (See its article of Saturday September 8.)

“Could force of effrontery further go ?

“What history would such a writer respect ?

“What facts would be strong enough to put him to silence and to shame ?

“And what case for Hungary could be sufficiently spotless to paralyze the arm of the confederate monsters, and the pen of

their miserable panders, who are prepared to enact again the ineffaceable crimes of 1771—1791?

“That national cause of Poland,—what eloquent vindication it found in the immortal eulogies it drew from Edmund Burke!

“Do Englishmen remember that transcendant passage in the ‘Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs?’

“Do they remember *the result*? How

‘Freedom shrieked when Kosciusko fell?’

And do they sufficiently realize the fact that there are crowned despots plighted to act out the tragedy on soils even more consecrated still in the eye of constitutional Europe—and creatures, too, on English soil—perhaps daring to boast of English blood—who are not ashamed to bid them speed, and give them help, in the prosecution of their liberticide and abominable designs?

“But let us be thankful that it is not all thus. All honour to the liberal press of London! Let us be thankful that there are sound hearts and noble spirits among us, who better represent the mind of England; and who, strong in the facts—unshakeable in the righteousness of the cause which has met for the present so dark a reverse,—may yet have the happiness of proving that their honesty has done some service to humanity, in bridling the lusts of the despot, crushing the lies of the hireling, and raising the hopes of the fallen.

“With much gratitude, I have the honour to remain,

“Your obedient servant,

“Clifton, Sept. 12, 1849.”

“GEO. ARMSTRONG.”

The failure of the Hungarians is too well known to need further mention,—a failure common, alas! to all the unfortunate countries who, galled by the same chains and inspired by the same hopes, had made that last and dreadful appeal to arms to vindicate their rights. Clouds gathered again over the continent of Europe, the sun of liberty set for many a long year, and the hearts of all patriots were sad.

The next great European event was the Russian War. Mr. Armstrong entered with his usual spirit into an examination and defence of this great contest, and delivered two long lectures on

the subject to his congregation at Lewin's Mead, full of eloquence and power, and full of hope too for truth and freedom, "when Russia should be deprived of the power of interfering to prevent their progress."

Alas! that all the glorious dreams of my friend's ardent imagination, the prayerful anticipations of his noble and enthusiastic spirit should have failed of realization, and that so much blood and treasure should have been spent, so many homes and hearts made desolate, so fearful an amount of human suffering and heroic self-devotion been endured, for so small a result! Europe still trembles under the weight of armies of hundreds of thousands strong, ready to do the bidding of three or four men isolated from the great heart of humanity by their unnatural position, and removed from sympathy with their fellow-creatures by the ambitious and wicked passions it engenders. Their consciences, too, where they have any, are not their own, but committed to the keeping of a Church which claims over men's souls the same irresponsible tyranny they exercise over their bodies. Poor, suffering nations, when will your rulers learn their duty and devote their lives and hearts to you—to the development of your resources, the encouragement of your best hopes and noblest aspirations, the clearing away of your prejudices, and the hastening of the time when you shall recognize a brother in every foreign clime and words of kindness in every tongue, instead of encouraging your ignorance, misdirecting your zeal, and trading upon your passions for their own selfish purposes and "dynastic ends"?

But there are two circumstances in the public life of Mr. Armstrong which I have not yet mentioned, purposely reserving them, on account of their importance, for a special reference. The two great and most absorbing objects of his attention and activity during the latter part of his life were the Anti-slavery movement in America, and the restoration of the British and Foreign School Society to its original principles, which had been grossly violated by its managers. The deep interest he took in the former cause will be best gathered from the letters which I have printed in the Appendix. His labours to enlighten public



opinion in England upon the subject were incessant and continued to the latest period of his life.

The principle upon which the British and Foreign School Society was originally founded was, to use the words of one of its early Reports, "to give no countenance to the peculiar doctrines of any sect, that it may include the aid of any persons professing to be Christians."\* The religious education of the children was at the same time provided for by the daily reading of the Scriptures with such applications and explanations of their moral teaching only as were suited to the comprehension of the learners. Such a broad and liberal system naturally attracted the support and attention of Unitarians, who gave both their money and their labour towards the establishment of the institution which adopted it, and were among the number of its earliest benefactors.

Mr. Armstrong, as we have seen, was already well acquainted with the working of the Irish system of mixed education, and a strong advocate of its merits. The nearly corresponding system of the British and Foreign School Society, which he had an opportunity of testing in its integrity, on his settlement at Bristol, in the large schools in connection with the Lewin's-Mead congregation, satisfied him that it was the best means of securing "an education based on religion, on a sufficiently extended scale to meet the wants of the nation at large."† He felt convinced that in this Society, as it was originally constituted, the country could find a practical solution of the difficulties surrounding the vexed question of national education. It was, therefore, with great dismay and disappointment that he found this noble principle violated, and the healing truth upon which the Society had been established ignored and trampled upon by the Committee and Mr. Dunn, their Secretary. They had not hesitated to introduce what are commonly known as orthodox doctrines into the regular teaching at the chief establishment and training-school for masters and mistresses in the Borough Road, and had in one of their Reports publicly avowed their non-

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\* Report of British and Foreign School Society for the year 1814.

† Letter of Mr. Armstrong to the editor of the *Bristol Mercury* in 1855.

co-operation with Unitarians, on the ground of "important differences of religious sentiment."

Mr. Armstrong at once set to work to expose this breach of faith with the public, and wrote to the Chairman of the first annual meeting of the Society after its discovery, to apprise him of it and beg his notice of the fact in his speech. The Chairman, Lord John Russell, duly acknowledged the receipt of his communication, but took no further notice of its contents. This was in the year 1844, and from that time to the end of his life he continued unweariedly to labour to restore an institution, so powerful for good, to the broad principles of union and charity from which it had so shamefully departed. He did not take up the question as one affecting the rights of Unitarians only, but as affecting all "the friends of religious liberty and the advocates of universal education upon liberal principles of whatever connection," whose co-operation and support was especially solicited by the Society in its "Report on Invested Subscriptions" in February, 1815. "Incidentally," says Mr. Armstrong, in one of his printed pamphlets on the subject, "the controversy has fallen to the lot of the Unitarian denomination, since it is in regard to it that this contract with the 'friends of religious liberty' has been more directly violated; but only thus far has it any *special* interest in the discussion."

Regularly, as the time for the annual meeting came round, Mr. Armstrong wrote to the nobleman or gentleman who was to take the chair to inform him of the existing state of "religious liberty" in the Borough-Road School, enclosing the necessary documents to prove the justice of his complaint; but they all shuffled him off with excuses; and Exeter Hall continued, and still continues, to ring with their eulogiums upon "the breadth and catholicity" of a system "which excludes none entitled to call themselves Christians." To shew the importance Mr. Armstrong attached to the original Constitution of this Society, I will quote the words he printed on the title-page of a pamphlet on its "Original Intention and Present Management:—"

"The solution which the restoration of the British and Foreign School Society's Constitution will yield to the practicability of

an education with *religion*, but without sectarianism, will be a grand national boon, and relief to many a statesman's mind ; while it delivers us from the ineffectual talk and abortive schemes of so many educational parties both in and out of the House of Commons."

And to justify the view he took of the intentions of Joseph Lancaster and his supporters, and the interpretation he gave to the printed Rules they had drawn up, I subjoin a letter from Lord Brougham, who was one of the first promoters of the scheme.

" Grafton Street, February 15, 1847.

" Lord Brougham presents his compliments to Mr. Armstrong, and assures him that he fully concurs in the whole statement, and would even go further. But instead of signing it, he had rather give his own most positive and distinct recollection of all that passed in 1810 and 1811, and of all that had passed for years before on the subject.

" Lord B. was in the chair at a preliminary meeting held in November, 1810, at the Thatched House in St. James's Street. It was attended by William Allen, Joseph Fox and other friends of the plan then called the Lancaster plan of general education, and known as that of founding schools for *all*. The name of British and Foreign was adopted on the analogy of the Bible Society for distributing Bibles 'without note or comment,' in order to embrace all sects whatever. Lord B. opened the business of the meeting by a full statement of this fundamental principle, and proposed forming the Society under that name. This was unanimously agreed to, after he had further given an account of the exertions made by William Allen and the other five supporters of J. Lancaster. In April following, Lord B. attended the meeting in Freemason's Hall, convened to approve and execute the former resolutions of 1810, and he moved one of the resolutions. The Duke of Bedford presided, whose opinions Lord B. knows, from constant communication with him, to be clearly and distinctly in favour of the *unexclusive* principle as the very corner-stone of the system, and who, when Lord B. presided in 1835 at the Exeter-Hall meeting, sent through him £100 to the fund.

“ Lord B. was never more astonished with anything than with the information received last autumn, that any person should have presumed to attempt to pervert the Society to uses the very opposite to those for which it was founded. Worse could not be done by the strongest enemies the Society ever had. Having, by accident, been so much connected with the institution from the very beginning, he naturally feels the more wonder and even indignation.”

As an interesting record of another of Mr. Armstrong's efforts in the cause of “liberty of conscience,” which he so truly valued and so gallantly served, I have printed among his correspondence a few of the letters to the public men who took part in, or who could influence, the proceedings of this Society. They are able defences of a cause which I recommend to those who have entered into the labours of my deceased friend, and are still trying to bring the Borough-Road authorities to a sense of justice.

As they come to the end of this chapter, my readers will, no doubt, share with me in the reflections it suggests of how imperfectly even yet the rights of mind are understood in England,—how little that individual freedom of thought, without which no convictions of truth can produce their proper effect, or indeed be built on a sound foundation, is encouraged,—and how the religion of Jesus Christ is made the excuse for an intolerance which in its essence it distinctly condemns. The constant injustice done to Unitarians by other denominations of Christians, and the constant interference with the right of private judgment, by invidious distinctions and other petty annoyances, are blots upon Protestantism which it would do well to get rid of. Mr. Armstrong never allowed them to go unchallenged or unrebuked, and his earnestness and courage deserve the imitation not only of those who share his opinions, but of all other well-wishers to the progress of truth, and the growth of a manly self-reliance in every class of their countrymen.

## CHAPTER V.

### GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS.

I MUST quit the pleasant task of tracing my friend's career from the promises of his early days to their fulfilment in his interesting and consistent manhood, to speak of the close of his life. Old age came, not only too soon for those who loved him, but even before it is generally looked for, hastened by the painful complaint from which he suffered so long, and which, at last, carried him away from the labours and duties of this world. But although the advancing years so rapidly enfeebled his body, spreading the snows of winter upon his head before all the autumn had passed away, hollowing his cheeks and making him walk with a stooping gait, they left his mind untouched. His spirit shone as brightly through its wasted tenement within a few hours of its departure as when he wrote his letters to Blanco White, or defended liberty of conscience in his study at his "sweet home at Bingfield." The subjects and opinions dear to him, I may almost say in youth, and which continued to occupy and interest him during all his days of strength, were the solace of his declining years and the deep convictions of his soul when "alone before eternity." There must have been a deep faith in his heart, a noble, aspiring hope of heaven in his mind, to keep him so calm, so uncomplaining and so happy, during the long period he was so tried by bodily suffering. Sometimes for several nights together he could not lie down in his bed from a difficulty of breathing in that position, and for many hours

in succession he would remain supported by pillows, his hands clutching a band attached to the bed-posts to keep himself balanced, with scarcely power enough to utter a single word. But the word he did manage to speak was always a pleasant one, and many such are stored in my memory now which were whispered to me with a kind smile in those sad times.

I date these years of declining health from 1852.

"I have been for many weeks on the sick list," he writes to a friend on the 15th February of that year, "having been taken ill with a severe attack of bronchitis on Christmas-day, and from thence kept my bed for five weeks. I am now recovering my health slowly, and getting out for an hour every day; and hope, after an intended trip to Dawlish or elsewhere, for a fortnight's change of air, to be tolerably well prepared to resume my pastoral duties. But the truth is, I was never before so near the closing of the great drama,—or rather to the raising of the curtain between us and the great future! And I can testify that the prospect of release has in it more of quietude and suavity, even to *nature's thought*, than I had previously thought quite possible, at least to my nature. As to more important concerns, those I thought had properly belonged to the period of health and strength; and as to my mixed condition of good and ill regarded from *that* point of view, I was humbly willing to leave myself in the hands a faithful and merciful Creator!

"But my term of probation is again extended, and I must now strive more than ever, with the help of His free spirit, through my dear Lord and Leader Jesus Christ, to render my account less blurred and blotted against the latter day—how soon or syne that day may indeed come. Deeper than ever before, that lesson has sunk into my heart which the angel Michael offered to the meditation of our first father:

'Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st,  
Live well: how long, or short, permit to Heaven.'"

During the year 1853, he was tolerably free from attacks of illness, and very active in the discharge of his duties. He preached several sermons in different parts of the country, delivered a remarkable lecture on American Slavery in the spring, and in the

autumn and winter took part with his colleague, Mr. James, in a course of doctrinal lectures at Lewin's-Mead chapel. Mrs. Stowe was in England in this year, and her presence seemed still further to increase his ardent zeal in the American anti-slavery cause, as the following letter shews :

*To the Rev. Henry Solly.*

“ Clifton, April 16, 1853.

“ My dear Solly,—You must be up and doing. The British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society, by its circular to all ministers, has answered your questions to me not long since, and chalked out our line of action in the anti-slavery struggle at the approaching May meetings in London.

“ They have sent us a most refreshing document, and we must respond to it. The lazy blood of our softly going Association must be quickened in its veins ; and at such a crisis, when all England is in a furor, or shortly will be now that Mrs. Stowe is in our midst, old precedents and the stiffness of routine formulas must give way before the moral outburst, and consent to some expression of our still deeper and deeper interest in the national tragedy to which our co-believers in America are guilty parties, so long as they do not stand out and energetically protest that their hearts and hands are clear of it.

“ We quite meditate some congregational action at Lewin's-Mead, in the way of an appeal to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association as conservators of ‘ civil and religious liberty ’ abroad as well as at home. That was a good hint of yours ; follow it up ; and get your people too to stir themselves, and poke up friend Tagart and the Association. Preach a sermon or announce a lecture on the subject of ‘ American Slavery.’ We shall do so here. Write to others in the provinces to do the same. Kell, Steinthal, G. Harris and Hincks, I think we may be certain of.

“ And now one word or two on another point. Do not let the Unitarian body be unrepresented at the general British and Foreign Anti-slavery meeting to be held at Exeter Hall on Monday, the 16th of May. Write to the Secretary to say you desire to be on the platform, and are willing to offer your aid in

taking or seconding any motion. Moreover, I think the Secretary ought to pay Mr. Estlin the compliment of inviting him for a like purpose. No man in England now living has done so much, or laboured at least so hard, in the cause of the American slave. Exorcise, so far as in you lies, the spirit of religious exclusion; and warn these men, when and where it may be necessary, against the substitution of one species of despotism for another, helping to chain the soul while they unfetter the body, —reversing the policy of the American Unitarians (shame upon their name!), who affect to free the mind, while they tamely and connivingly look on at the systematic immolation of body and soul among millions of their brethren in Jesus Christ! Write to Dr. Hutton and any others you can; and ever believe me, dear Solly, truly yours,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.”

In the spring of 1854, he was very ill, and had scarcely recovered before he was summoned to Scotland, to the dying bed of one of his sons. This long journey, made doubly trying by the sadness of his mission, he encountered with his usual fortitude, Mrs. A. accompanying him; and after closing the eyes of his poor child, he found strength enough of mind and body, on the Sunday succeeding the funeral, to preach to the few worshipers who meet in the Unitarian chapel of the distant town of Aberdeen. His sermon was upon the first verse of the twenty-third Psalm, “I shall not want;” and he thus touchingly concluded it:

“The spiritual mercies of our Heavenly Father are all connected. To have one is, sooner or later, to have all. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. If He has put this fear in you, his mercy will be everlasting to you. He tells you so. He speaks to you from heaven and says, ‘I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’ Then let your trusting answer be, ‘He never WILL forsake me!’ Have the boldness of holy David, and say, ‘I shall not want. I will fear no evil. Surely goodness and mercy shall ever follow me. I shall dwell in the house of the Lord and the home of my Father for ever.’

“My dear Christian friends, I have endeavoured, very



imperfectly, and with no slight struggle of heart, to place before you some features of the grace and goodness of God—its power over fainting souls, and its blessed augury of better things and days to come. You will forgive me if I have done but little justice to the subject, but little justice to my own feelings.

“ But in this, as in much besides, I know I am appealing to generous, tender and feeling minds. I have come to share in a great grief; but I have been permitted, too, to share in large compensation and even in holy pleasures. If I have seen much on the suffering side of our mortal nature, I have seen not a little on the virtuous side of it; and, while mourning for a parted child, can bless Heaven that I have made an endeared acquaintance with never-to-be-forgotten and ever-to-be-valued friends.

“ May God bless you all for your kindness! May He make his face to shine upon you; and in *your* hour of darkness, when walking through the valley of shadows, may He still be ‘with you,’ and ‘his rod and his staff comfort you!’ ”

During the year 1855, his health was very uncertain, but he managed to get through a great deal of work. He delivered the two lectures we have already mentioned on the Crimean War, and, among many other labours of a like kind, prepared and presented, with a deputation, an address of thanks to Lord Brougham, from the Western Christian Union, for his services in the cause of the British and Foreign School Society dispute; and was occupied, during the greater part of the summer and winter, in the preparation of a pamphlet and in a voluminous correspondence on the same subject.

In 1856, he was so ill that the congregation with great kindness proposed to give him a three months’ vacation, to enable him to devote his time entirely to the restoration of his health. He gladly accepted the offer, and went away to Tenby to try the effect of sea-air and change of scene. It was of no avail; his illness increased, and he was heartily glad to escape from the questionable comforts of a lodging to the peaceful retirement of his own home.

On the 22nd of September, about a month after his return, he wrote to me as follows :

“ In bed, Durdham Park, September 22, 1856.

“ Dear H.,—Don’t be alarmed. I am still poorly, but have been unaccountably victimized again, after recovering beautifully on my return from Tenby, and enjoying immensely my daily routine of horse exercise, mutton-chop and gentle mental stimulus. No clerical duty. Yet without any known cold or any traceable cause, in walks, one evening, my old friend Mr. Asthma ; and having made thus free, refuses to budge until he had fairly, or foully, laid me upon the shelf again.

“ Well, thus far he has his will ; and now it seems to be the doctor’s turn to get the upper hand.

“ Tuesday, 23rd. An excellent night of quiet and delicious sleep. To-day, by confession of the doctor, approaching the period when I shall be charming well again. But for how long, or with what restored powers of action, who that has experienced my many and strange changes can venture even to conjecture ? All evening duty certainly at an end. I have the strongest persuasion myself that it will be the same with all morning duty as well.

“ What then remains, but conversation, correspondence, meditation on themes, ‘from gay to grave, from lively to severe ;’ and a tranquil abiding for the day when the curtain shall drop upon one world, to open upon a new, though kindred one, of truth and purity and glory ? Will you not often come and help me to live these generous days ? The moral blank is everywhere extending and darkening. The powers of evil are in startling predominance ; and the stiletto it wields, if more polished, is yet more pointed and deadly than ever. The tolerance of Europe for Austria and for Washington is, and must henceforth continue to be, with me, the test-point of the character of our times. I nowhere see these points accurately and energetically insisted upon in the public press, not even in the *Dispatch*. My own amazement is, that with such enginery in its hands, the writing staff of our leading journals can ever write of anything else.

"I am writing in bed; and must now scribble a few lines elsewhere. By and by, I am to be up in the next room, 'a eating of my mutton and turnips,' washed down with a tumbler of warm sherry and water. Worse things might come than being an invalid on such terms,—writing in some intervals of cheerful lucidity to my always dear friend Bob, to whom, with his good wife and sweet bairns, all kind and loving regards from their affectionate friend,

"G. A."

After this letter, he continued to mend, and looked forward to resuming his duties. The spirit at least was willing; so on October 12th he took his accustomed place to speak once more, after his long absence, to his faithful congregation. But it was only once. He delivered his sermon with his usual animation; but I had a haunting dread—for I was among his hearers—that I was listening to him for the last time. His friends crowded into the vestry after the service to congratulate him on his re-appearance among them. He was less exhausted than he anticipated, and he passed the rest of the day in cheerful conversation. But the next morning he was very ill. He recovered himself a little after his breakfast, and, as the sun was shining, could not resist an attempt to walk round the garden. I gave him my arm, on which he leaned very heavily, for he was very weak and breathed with much difficulty. One turn was enough for him; he was glad to get back to his chair, and, sinking into it, gasped out painfully, "This will never do; I evidently cannot preach; I must send in my resignation." "Talk of that another time," interposed his judicious wife, anxious to turn his thoughts from so painful a subject. But that other time, alas! was soon to come. On the 28th of October, about a fortnight after I parted from him, I received the following letter:

"To you, above most, perhaps more than to all other men who know or care for me, it will be interesting to know what has befallen in the brief interval since we last parted.

"You left on Tuesday morning, and that evening the symptoms of an attack so unmistakeably presented themselves, that I was

obliged to come to bed early, and undergo for that night, and the two days and nights following, the usual miseries of my old malady.

“ My three months’ period of vacation had already expired, and the congregational committee were to meet on the Thursday evening, with much enlargement of other members, to deliberate on my antecedent proposition of holding on as joint minister, but with diminished duty, should my strength prove equal even to that modification of pulpit labour. This sudden attack, however, so decided, and so directly, as I felt it to be, the result of my efforts on the previous Sunday, suggested a proportionably decided course, and I dictated a letter in time for their meeting, *absolutely resigning*. It was received and listened to with all possible sorrow. Hopes have been thrown out that I might modify or suspend my determination; but my own feelings, and my doctor’s entire concurrence therein, put a veto to any change whatever. And now, here I am without a pulpit, and an income lessened by nearly £300 a-year! Yet not, thank Heaven, cast down, but wonderfully sustained and cheered by my inestimable friend, counsellor and wife, who approves, while lamenting, and feels but little misgiving as to our future; what she does most lament being that she is no longer to hear me in the pulpit, or to feel herself to be a pastor’s wife.

“ And now, to pass from self,” he adds with his characteristic elasticity of mind, “ the *Dispatch* is itself again. A magnificent raker in the last on the Kansas atrocities! Pray find out for me something about Mr. Thomas Gladstone,\* of Stockwell Lodge, Surrey; clearly enough a right-hearted Englishman.

“ The Anti-slavery Standard you shall have by to-morrow’s post. I wish you would study Sumner’s great speech,—its logic, its history, its ethics and its eloquence. The close is magnificent, and worth the martyrdom of Brooks’ bludgeon. I am only to-day sitting up in my bed-room for the second time, but am beginning to feel better again.”

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\* Author of some remarkable letters to the editor of the *Times* on the “ Kansas Question.”

This parting was, as he truly said, "one of all possible sorrow" to his congregation, and they hastened to express it in the following address :

"Reverend and dear Sir,—We are truly grieved to learn that the impaired state of your health obliges you to resign your office as pastor of the Lewin's-Mead congregation. It had been our earnest hope, that God, in his great mercy, would restore your strength, and spare you to minister in coming years to a people whose privilege it has been, through a long period, to listen, we trust with profit, to the fervent and faithful exhortations which you have addressed to them. We deeply regret the loss of ministrations which have aided so many of us in the culture of the religious life; and we would thank you for the help you have thus given. We shall always gratefully remember the earnestness with which you have stood forth whenever our religious liberty has been assailed, and your exertions in endeavouring to gain a larger measure of it for those who shall come after us. We shall, at the same time, call to mind the sacrifices which you have made for conscience' sake; and will take to our own hearts the example you have set, of giving up friendships, pecuniary advantages and social position, for those opinions which we all alike profess and alike hold dear.

"We feel that your retirement, and that of each earnest man who is taken from us, lays on those who remain a deeper obligation to carry on, with renewed courage and in a holier spirit, every work that lies before us as servants of Christ.

"We pray that an all-wise and good God, who has seen fit to afflict you, and to deprive us of a revered and beloved Minister, will, in his own good time, restore you to some measure of health, when it will be our happiness, and, we believe, an addition to your own, that we should seek in the quiet retirement of your study that communion of spirit which may still cheer, counsel and strengthen us in our passage through life.

"That our Heavenly Father will continue to bless you in your home and in your family—that He will guard and guide you and yours in all the events of life—and that one fold, even that of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, may receive us all at

the last great day, is the heartfelt and earnest prayer of your attached people !

“ Signed, on behalf of the congregation,  
 “ Nov. 16th, 1856.”      “ CHARLES THOMAS, Treasurer.”

Mr. Armstrong returned the following answer :

“ Durdham Park, near Bristol, Nov. 17, 1856.

“ My dear Friends,—It has pleased the Almighty to restore to me some measure of strength to acknowledge—though necessarily in very imperfect words—the affectionate address in reply to my letter of resignation, of which your worthy Treasurer, Mr. Charles Thomas, was the bearer to my house last evening.

“ I am glad you have perceived that the course I have taken was wholly unavoidable; and that from no cause less serious than a state of health which gave but little hope of any permanent amendment, could I have been induced to dissolve a relation so solemn and so important to my people, to my family, and to myself.

“ For the assurance you give me that, in the course of my ministrations during an extended period of little short of twenty years, I have succeeded in deepening the religious convictions, and in helping on the spiritual life and culture, of many among you, I feel truly thankful; while it reminds me that the efficacy of all such labours can only be due to the power of that holy guidance which I ever sought as the alone source of all human goodness, and the best support of all human weakness. As a Christian minister, not to say as a sinning man, I felt profoundly that I could have no strength, and least of all any peace, *out of Christ*. Conscious of shortcomings, great and numerous, I could not but flee to that Throne from which none were ever sent empty away,—and renewing my soul at that Fountain, caught the needed strength to assure my own heart,—and, as you kindly acknowledge, to raise and comfort yours.

“ Forgive me, brethren, if in the act of thanking you I may seem to say more than the occasion would naturally elicit; and especially if I speak this as a truth on which none can too deeply

reflect. The world wants more of communion with Christ. In our public life, in our home life, and chiefly and supremely of all, as including the rest, in our solitary heart, we need to know Christ as a power of God (not as a subject of speculation) more than we have yet known him. In the latter days of my life, and still on my sick bed, I place this truth before you with more solemnity than I could have ever done before; and I desire in this closing communication with you, dear and Christian friends, that you should feel I can neither seek for you nor for myself any higher blessing from our Heavenly Father, any more precious fruit of the mission of his Christ, as the wisdom of God and the *power* of God unto salvation in the heart of every one that believes.

“As to external matters, you have been pleased to refer with satisfaction to exertions I have made from time to time in behalf of our religious liberties; and if I have been fortunate in some local and special efforts of that character, I am the more pleased that you have borne those efforts in mind, because it gives me the opportunity of entreating you to be thus mindful of what has hitherto been done, that you may the better see and provide for what remains to be done in this great department of your Christian duty.

“In the circumstances of the present time, there seems to be a peculiar fitness in referring to the raised and liberalized character of the British Schools of this city;—as to which I would earnestly desire you to remember, that having gained, or, more correctly, having *recovered* a position of co-equality with other religious connections, it behoves you to be watchful in the care of that position, and that you suffer the aggressive spirit of religious bigotry at no time to take you by surprise, or find you sleeping at your post.

“In fine, whether as regards the Redcross-Street British School, now so happily brought into practical harmony with your own, or the administration of the *Parent Society* at the Borough Road in London, whose instructive history by Mr. Leyson Lewis has been recently placed in the hands of some of the more active members of your congregation, and for whose

liberal and faithful management in the equal interests of all religious denominations in this country, they and others must be so largely responsible,—the more so as its restored spirit and character would so auspiciously affect the great question of a national education, still pending in and out of Parliament;—or, lastly, as regards the catholic principle of another important institution of our country—the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, with its affiliated branches throughout the kingdom,—it will be among the latest and most earnest of my wishes, dear brethren, that, being *open* institutions, you omit no practical measures to *keep* them open; and that, as healthful members of Christ's body, ready to do and to say the right thing at the right time, you should, in a godly jealousy for your own and your children's liberties, do all and be all for Him who gave Himself for you, that He might purify you unto Himself as a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

“Oh, brethren! ‘our heart is enlarged unto you;’ yet to think and to write as I ought, is more than I have strength for. Nevertheless, because you permit me to believe that you have profited by my earnestness, and because you console me with the idea that I have reached you, through the depth of my own feeling, on some topics of Christian exhortation,—weak as I am, I take courage in beseeching you to bear with me in yet one word more, and I have done.

“‘Remember,’ then, I fervently exhort you, ‘*them that are in bonds, as bound with them.*’ Bear in mind the dark and still increasing iniquity of our age. Suspect the worldly spirit of those who would think or speak lightly upon it. And as God has ordained it an eternal truth, that ‘righteousness only exalteth a nation,’ do not believe in the real prosperity of that people—do not believe in the religion of that church—which can see in the fearful institution of SLAVERY anything less than a hindrance efficacious beyond all others in repressing the advancement of nations, even the most distant from the seat of the evil,—a stumbling-block to the progress and the power of the Anglo-Saxon race,—and thus by hands so unfitted for the abhorrent work, instead of entailing glory, and honour, and freedom, and



virtue, and piety, on a prostrate world, weakening, degrading, demoralizing and depressing the WHOLE family of man. For ‘we are all members one of another.’ And the poorest slave of Alabama cannot uplift his unavailing voice for justice and mercy, without leaving so much the less of power in the world to resist the energetic tyrannies which everywhere surround us! Then take, brethren, a lesson from the enemy; and as tyrannies cling to tyrannies, and the oppressor everywhere, directly or indirectly, helps the oppressor, be you ready by word and deed, as much as in you lies, to strengthen the cause of the just, and share in the striving of the faithful and the good.

“And be not discouraged, dear friends, to do what you may, because the desired result may seem to be remote. It is our privilege to live in the future. An irrepressible sympathy, of which the brute knows nothing, binds us to coming ages. And when we meet, through mercy, in that blessed future, where the faithful of all nations and all kindred shall see and know God’s final purposes of good, it will be matter of gratulation and joy that we had been permitted to lessen the sum of evil and swell the heritage of good to the generations which are to take our place, and to start in their new career of knowledge, of virtue, and of happiness, from the point at which we had left them.

“Reciprocating every good wish and prayer—invoking the healthful working of God’s Holy Spirit among you to ‘stablish, strengthen, settle you,’ as a united and a Christian people—and asking your pardon and favourable acceptance of these few hurried thoughts,—I remain, with sorrowing but sincere affection, dear brethren, your ever faithful friend and late pastor,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.”

The entries in his diary have almost ceased now; but occasionally, when his strength permitted him and other more serious occupations did not claim the precious moments that it lasted, he would resume his old practice of jotting down his thoughts and feelings on things personal and public. At the close of the year (1856) he writes as follows:

"Since, humbly resigning myself to the appointment of my Heavenly Father, I placed my resignation in the hands of my congregation, kindnesses many I have received, and pleasant intercourse by letter it has been permitted me to enjoy . . . . And, indirectly, from various sources, indications of esteem and sympathy have reached me, more than commensurate with any actual services I could have rendered, however fairly I might claim the merit of ardent aspirations and deepfelt desires for the advancement of mercy and justice, truth and righteousness, *all the world over.*"

The affectionate regard of the Lewin's-Mead congregation was not exhausted by an address. Anxious to shew their esteem for "the unflinching courage, fidelity and zeal," to use their own words, "which Mr. Armstrong had ever manifested in the cause of Christian Truth and Christian Liberty," they set on foot a subscription, with a view of making him a befitting present on his retirement. Their own liberality, aided by that of others, encouraged by their example, soon raised a considerable sum of money, which was duly presented to Mr. Armstrong. To this additional mark of esteem and kindness, his reply will be read with interest.

"Durdham Park, near Bristol, Feb. 5, 1857.

"My dear Mr. Lang,\*—Your packet, with its important enclosure, safely reached me yesterday. What can I say in reply? They found me in contented retirement, but have converted me into a poor debtor! For how can I ever requite so much kindness and trouble, undertaken and evinced on my behalf and that of my dear young family? Perhaps you will say that this recompence had been already earned by my services and sacrifices,—yet neither of these can I myself rate very highly. Certainly, as to the latter, I cannot assume any merit; for '*necessity was laid upon me,*' for my peace of heart and freedom of spirit, to disavow opinions I no longer held, and to promulgate and defend those which deliberate study and conviction had brought home to me as the very truth of God, and the best and surest

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\* Treasurer of Testimonial Fund.

guide for my troubled and uncertain steps through all the path of life. They have never deceived me. I did not embrace them for vulgar profit; but they have garnered into my soul an abundant harvest of joy and blessedness.

“LOCKE (in his third Letter on Toleration) says to an opponent,—a bigoted ecclesiastic of his day,—‘You ask me what party I write for? I will tell you. They are those who in every nation fear God, work righteousness, and are accepted of Him; and *not* those who in every nation are zealous for human constitutions, cry up nothing so much as outward conformity to the national religion, and are accepted by those who are the promoters of it.’

“Such was the party I, in my humble way, wrote and preached for; and I have never repented my course. The glory of reading with a *free soul* Channing’s immortal discourses,—that at Baltimore, for instance, in 1819, and that at New York in 1826 (*specimens* only of his marvellous power)—was more reward and higher privilege to me than all the hierarchies of earth combined together could confer,—so I *had* my reward; yet it would be affectation in me to underrate the importance and value of your munificent present to me and my children, contributed not only within the more immediate sphere of my ministerial duties, but over so wide a circle of dispersed but sympathizing friends, some of them, to their honour, of other communions. From my heart I thank them all, and only wish I had a tongue and pen sufficiently loud and potent to assure them, whether far or near, how truly I desire that they may be ‘filled with all joy and peace in believing,’ and devoutly pray for them the sustaining experience through life and death of the love of the ONE God and Father of all, through the grace of our ONE Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“For your individual interest on this occasion, and that of your associate, our Treasurer, Mr. Charles Thomas, I beg you to accept for yourself, and to present to him, the assurance of the lasting gratitude and deep personal regard of, dear Sir, ever truly and affectionately yours,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

“To Thomas Lang, Esq., Eastfield, Westbury.”

Alternate days of painful suffering and only comparative ease continued to be his lot.

"I am still a jail-bird," he writes to me in February, 1857, "still in my room, where I am very happy, though very weak; but in all other respects, physically as well as mentally, in a quite satisfactory state, eating well, sleeping well, and thinking and writing about all sorts of things.

"I have had a letter and a copy of his famous pamphlet from Mr. Grote; also a correspondence with Mr. E. C. Whitehurst, of the Ballot Society. You cannot think how I enjoy literature and politics, and I quite gloat over the idea of adding to my book lore by some contemplated purchases of Kerslake," &c.

To a very particular friend he writes as follows, on March 22, of this same year (1857):

"I have to thank you very much for your last interesting budget, which not only furnished to me matter of interest, but of wonder at your flexibility of genius . . . Most particularly am I interested and delighted at your noble ardour to elevate the Unitarianism in which you have been bred, to that position in the affections of its professors, and the respect and acceptance of the world, to which its scriptural and logical merits so clearly (to us) entitle it.

"I am old and grey-headed now, yet have I never found any description of religious truth so tenable by the intellect, and so suitable to the wants of the heart, as the *revelation* through Jesus of the watchful providence, the paternal character, and the righteous retributions of the One God and Father of all, who is 'above all and through all and in all.'

"But I cannot be content without the distinctive foundation of these truths (simple though they be) in the specific and historic *corroboration* afforded them by the gospel narratives. They are in themselves *theism*, to be sure; but they are *theism*, or natural religion, supernaturally confirmed; which makes all the difference to me, or at least the *essential* difference, between the son of Sophroniscus and the son of Mary. No one, that I know, so fully and fervently states and understands this as Orville Dewey in some of his noble discourses. Paley does it, but more concisely and severely.

"Thank you for your beautiful and touching lines, which Mrs. A. had previously noted and drawn my attention to in the *Inquirer*. They are true poetry, elevated truth, no fiction, but full of imagination, satisfying to the taste, just in their theology, and grateful to the devotional spirit. Pray go on and cultivate this talent, and displace the orthodoxy of Keble and Heber, so touched by the sacred fire, but so stained by the fumes of a man-made and degrading theology.

"I applaud, and yet do not quite understand, your views as to church loyalty among lay Unitarians. Loyalty to *what*? To some truth, surely, peculiar to that church. Yet what is that truth? and on what does it rest? From whence is it? from heaven or of men? You do not say; and our living writers seem all at sea about it. I am sure, for instance, I do not know what the *Inquirer* would be at. The *simplest* creed, if stated in words, affrights him. Yet *some* positive creed he seems to consider (justly, I think) indispensable to a church, and of course to 'church loyalty;' which is much the position of my friend Gordon, of Edinburgh, yet whose point of difference with Mr. J. J. Tayler I cannot very clearly make out.

"Thank you for 'Le Lien,' which I shall be glad to see and to circulate. I wish the *Inquirer* would devote a column to extracts therefrom, and also from Colani and other foreign sources, with translations for the general reader. We do not know enough of what the brethren abroad are doing or thinking. The 'Notes and Queries' are an admirable thought, and are sure to be popular.

"And now a brief and hasty note on politics.

"After all, what babies in politics our 'most thinking people' of England are! Right, certainly, in keeping power out of the hands of the Derbys; but ridiculously wrong in their indiscriminating support of that Derby in disguise, my Lord of Palmerston, who will palm himself upon us as a *popular* Minister! I have no patience with the inhuman *humanitarians* who would save Commissioner Yeh by the immolation of Plenipotentiary Bowring: to the former, shewing the most un-English spirit of humility; to the latter, the most unchristian spirit of rabid

animosity and heartless inconsideration ; for whose defence I am thankful, as I am for nothing else in his political life, to the present Prime Minister, and his amiable bottle-holder, Lord Clarendon. Would that Cobden were as right and clear-minded in everything as in his estimate and his ruthless dissection of the ministerial history of Palmerston ! It is snowing so heavily at this moment, I have no light for writing more."

Still the same generous man in sickness as in health, he has a kind word of encouragement and sympathy for all who need it. In the letter recently quoted, he speaks of the infamous attack upon Sir John Bowring for his policy in China. To that injured gentleman and faithful public servant he writes as follows :

"Durdham Park, March 8, 1857.

"Dear Sir John,—If in your distant as well as very arduous and exalted position, you ever have time or opportunity for knowing or thinking anything about your theological connections in England, you will have perhaps been apprised, before this reaches you, of my unhappily altered relation to the church in whose cause I have for many years laboured, and in whose promotion and advancement I have for very long been most earnestly interested.

"You are not to suppose, however, that it is on my own account, or to talk of myself and my poor concerns, that I now resolve to trouble you with these few hasty lines. Very different, and more worthy, is my object in doing so. It is, in short, to evince, in however feeble and humble a manner, my profound sympathy in your present almost unexampled trials ; and my no less perfect conviction that you will come out of the trial with a success the more complete,—if that phrase can be admitted,—and a reputation the more brilliant and lasting, in proportion to the fulness and honesty of the inquiries which may be directed into the motives, the necessities and the details of the momentous proceedings into which you have been launched, under circumstances of the most perilous and awful responsibility and difficulty by which a public servant was ever surrounded.

"Parliamentary faction is about to experience the reward it

has so well earned, and your pure character, and the best service of your country and of humanity, will, I doubt not, ere long be shewn to the whole world to stand upon one common pedestal, never to be overthrown while England has a history. The press of England, like its political parties, is split into divers forms of sham and folly in reference to your Chinese proceedings; but proud I am to see, and glad I am to forward to you by same post with this, an admirable specimen of good sense and right feeling on the part of our Bristol press in relation thereto, in an able journal, the *Bristol Advertiser*, established about a year ago.

“ With earnest prayers to the God of nations for a happy issue to you and to our country out of the afflictions and difficulties of the present crisis both at home and in the far East, and an honourable and happy return to you and yours to a grateful country and a peaceful home, believe me, dear Sir John, yours faithfully,  
 “ G. A.”

Public opinion has long since done justice to Sir John Bowring; but his touching reply to Mr. Armstrong, now lying before me, pleads so eloquently in his behalf, I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it as an interesting historical document.

“ Hong Kong, May 7, 1857.

“ My dear Sir,—I thank you much for your kind letter, one of the sweet serene voices which have reached me, to be heard and welcomed in the midst of furious thunder.

“ I little dreamed that the course I was taking to defend my country's rights and wounded honour would have subjected me to be dealt with more mercilessly than if I had been a common felon, a foul malefactor. I little thought that our ‘Arrow’ was to hit the target of a world's concerns, that it was to shake a Ministry, break up a Parliament, to agitate more than all Europe. But after all, the most thoughtful self-examination, the repose of the pillow, the questionings of the conscience, have not persuaded me that I have done wrong; and I doubt not, I cannot doubt, that out of the mass of slime and slander goodly fruits will grow.

“ I deeply appreciate, cordially welcome, gratefully acknowledge your words of kindness, so unhesitating and courageous—for some of my *friends* have expressed doubtful confidence. ‘ We knew you would not lie ; ’—indeed not. But to have been selected as a victim (the Admiral, a noble fellow, a party at every stage and step, and the actor, while I was but the adviser, is disgusted with the attempt to disassociate him) is, after all, an honour. I have been shot at, wounded, and obliged to leave the field, not by the courage or stratagem of the enemy ;—no, the attacks have come from our own ranks,—from men who knew the stuff they sought to vilify,—but who, once engaged, seemed determined to stop at nothing.

“ The field of politics, like the field of battle, must have its victims. I believe I should have conducted affairs to an honourable and successful issue. I shall cordially aid and help the new Plenipotentiary to do so, and, whatever be my fate, the country will not suffer by my temporary supercession.

“ It must have been a grateful event for you to close your public services at Lewin’s-Mead in such a bright sunset as was gathered about you, and to know full well that you had laboured, successfully laboured, in the sowings and the reapings and the gatherings of the harvests of truth and liberty,—not always so prolific as we had prayed and hoped for, but always bringing something to the garner of progress and the records of improvement. And so, my dear Sir, so continue to labour, and, if labour’s task is over, to love and encourage other labourers.

“ Ever very faithfully yours,

“ JOHN BOWRING.”

And so, in spite of sufferings and weakness, he did continue “labouring and encouraging other labourers” until the fatal month of August. It was a striking sight to see him writing at this time. He was generally in bed, propped up by pillows, with a piece of millboard, which he used as a desk, supported on his bent knees. He was wasted almost to a skeleton, and his pale, drawn face would have scarcely appeared to belong to a living body but for the bright flash of his eyes, which told that there was an unconquered mind within. His pen moved rapidly



over his paper, and he never seemed at a loss for matter. Some book-shelves were placed within his reach, on which were laid works of reference and a few volumes of his favourite authors, and by his side a little table, covered with newspapers, among which the Anti-Slavery Standard was always conspicuous.

In the controversies of the Unitarian church on the subjects of philosophy and theology, he always took the conservative side. He had great reverence for Locke and Paley, and great faith in the historical evidences and supernatural guarantees of the divine origin of Christianity. "If I have bigotry at all on such a subject," he writes to a young friend at Cambridge in 1852, "and I suppose I have, I must confess to a hatred of the instinctive, transcendental and what-not German school of moral and metaphysical philosophy—the spawn of Kant's misunderstood speculations—the dreams of the half-crazed Coleridge, and the inane fancy of the Hares, Sterlings, Whewells, in long and varied succession since." I refer again to this characteristic of his mind, as he was occupied during many of his last days in defending these views of theology and philosophy, which he thought were threatened with annihilation in the Unitarian church by the tendency to the opposite school evinced by recent public appointments within her pale. He published two long letters to Mr. Long, signed "Pro Aris et Focis;" and on the last day of his life was busy with an essay on the same subject, of which he has left an unfinished manuscript.

But I am disposed to think that he was not constituted by nature for the purely abstract or destructive labours of the scholar and the critic. He had too large a heart, was too fond of action, and too deeply interested in the concerns of external life. The intellectual faculties were balanced by the devotional and practical. What he sought in religion was not only the satisfaction of his own mind, the repose of his conscience, or the solace of his soul, but an instrument to raise mankind from sin and degradation, an *authoritative* message from on high "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free." This instrument he

was convinced he had found in the religion of Jesus Christ, and he looked with a jealous eye on all attempts to weaken the foundations on which he rested its claims on man's acceptance and belief, and on which he fancied the safety of the whole fabric depended. He could not survey the awful and sublime subject of revealed religion from the calm height of indifferent science. The labours of the student were therefore only subservient to those of the apostle. The bewildering problems which concern the essence of our being were not to him matters of egotistical display or mere polemical victory ; they were subjects requiring the utmost stretch of his intellect and the deepest questionings of his soul, that he might apply the results to, and test their truth by, the great business of life and the duties of humanity.

Of all the perils and dangers to our moral nature to which we are subject when tenants of the sick room, none is so besetting, or perhaps more pardonable, than selfishness,—a disposition to be engrossed by our own sufferings and a morbid pondering of our spirit upon our own misery, often producing irritability of temper, and too little consideration for the trouble and anxiety we necessarily inflict upon those around us. Mr. Armstrong was superior to this the great temptation of his condition, and, bowing his head meekly to the will of God, bore his infliction with the magnanimity of an heroic soul, never occupied with himself or his own fate, but always with the fate of others and of the great interests of truth and justice. Although I have already alluded to this charming feature in his disposition, a few more of his letters written at this period will not be unwelcome, for they beautifully exemplify it :

*To the Editor of the Inquirer.*

“ April 27, 1857.

“ Sir,—There are many competing objects at this moment which appeal to the best impulses of my nature, and inspire me with the wish, never but in such moments felt, that I were a rich or an affluent person. But as it has otherwise seemed good to “ the Giver of all good things,” I must content myself with the selection enforced upon me by the comparative narrowness of my

means, and beg of you to be my almoner for two objects which lie very deep indeed in the most earnest aspirations I am able to form for the good of the generation in which I am permitted to live,—the support of the Arctic expedition about to be sent out for the last time by that incomparable woman, Lady Franklin, whom it ought to be the pride of her countrymen to sustain to the very uttermost in her magnanimous efforts; and the contribution,—I trust to be worthy of our church and the cause it is assumed by our foreign and suffering brethren to represent,—which already is in process of collection for the support of the Unitarian, not liberties only, but very existence, under such direful menace by the Austrian tyranny in Hungary.

“As to the former object, allow me to recal to yourself and the intelligent and energetic circle of your readers, who, if not numerous, are actuated for the most part, on suitable occasions, by a public spirit which does them honour, that it was the *Inquirer* which first became the advocate, and subsequently the instrument, of that memorable and meritorious movement, the penny subscription for Mr. Rowland Hill, which resulted in a collection for that true but otherwise unappreciated servant of the public of £13,000. Be again, then, the ministrant in a no less noble service; take the charge of my poor but willing mite of one guinea for Lady Franklin, and of one guinea for the professors of our faith in the Transylvanian church. And pray accept and distribute for both the best benedictions of his heart from

“AN ENGLISHMAN.”

*To the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P.*

“Durdham Park, near Bristol, May 23, 1857.

“My Lord,—It may seem to savour of over-strong or presumptuous language, to say that the writer of these few words is, personally speaking, as deeply and earnestly interested in the great object of united National Education, as your Lordship or any public man in England can be, though, in point of position, standing in so different a relation to that great question.

“I have been induced thus to obtrude myself, humble as I am, on your Lordship’s notice, from having read the remarks

which fell from you as Chairman of the annual meeting of the British and Foreign School Society, in the course of your Lordship's reply to the vote of thanks presented by the meeting on Friday, the 15th May,—from the tone of which remarks, it would appear that your Lordship is unable to point out to others, or fully to comprehend in your own mind, any alternative between minute doctrinal instruction in the Holy Scriptures, and the abandonment of all moral inculcation, such as could be of any value or efficiency in a national scheme of education; in fact, that nothing lies between such doctrinal teaching and what is called the purely 'secular' scheme.

"My Lord, with all respect, but with all urgency, I do implore of you, as a personal courtesy and justice, for a moment to glance at the far different opinion of the late Dr. Arnold, as stated in the short printed paper which I take the liberty of addressing to you by same post with this; and further, that your Lordship will permit me to trouble you in like manner to cast your eye on the few lines marked at pp. 3, 15 and 34, of the small tract I also have the honour to transmit, although I believe your Lordship has already on some former occasion been furnished with a copy of that tract. In justice to a great question, to which, from long ill health, I am no longer able to give the same attention I have done in former years, and in the unalterable interests of truth, while fully impressed with the incessant demands on your Lordship's time, I crave one moment's earnest thought of your Lordship, and remain, respectfully yours,

"GEO. ARMSTRONG."

*To the Rev. Mr. Conway, Cincinnati, Massachusetts.*

"Durdham Park, near Bristol, England,

"June 20, 1857.

"Dear Sir,—I have now before me the New York Anti-Slavery Standard of the 6th June, and find therein matter of deep interest to me,—not the least, those manly efforts made by you, defeated for the moment as they were, to place our brethren in the faith in the right way, and enable them to beacon the brethren afar off, as well as those around them, to occupy

their just place in the great strife which God has called them to sustain, but from which so many of them would shrink and skulk away at the daring or dastard behest of man.

"I have watched *you*, dear sir, in your ever-faithful conflicts with the foul spirit of our age, and cannot sufficiently marvel that such eloquence, energy and *heartiness*, should fail in carrying with them all that was rational and sound in any civilized community,—much more in a society such as the *Unitarian*, trained in the discipline of obloquy, versed in the weapons of the intellect, and professors and propagandists of the purest form of the precious faith of Christ. Surely 'God moves in a mysterious way,' or this could not be! But the finite can but faintly conceive of the infinite; and, judging from the analogies of external nature, cycles of *time* would seem to be as nothing in the Divine contemplation. Yet one cannot easily, even with the utmost stretch of these pious expedients, imagine a Providence of wisdom and love ordaining successive generations of intelligent creatures to pass away under the harrow of such dreadful affliction, suffering and degradation, as befal the African race, and chiefly at the hands of the foremost and most civilized portion of the human race, the Anglo-Saxon! But these dark speculations aside, how one's heart is stunned, and almost one's hope is quenched, at beholding a brother, whom we should otherwise regard and honour as a fellow-labourer in the vineyard, lending himself, under some infatuation of head or heart, to do, not Christ's but the devil's work, and playing into the hands of *the enemies of the human race* (for so I count the slave-holding and slavery-defending and conniving classes of America), by the petty tricks and contemptible formalisms resorted to last year at Chicago, and this year by *Dr. Elliot* at the 'Western Unitarian Conference?' You say, 'You know the Elliots, but this man you had not met before; and that none could suspect either them or him of being wanting in the love of freedom,' &c. I am sorry I cannot second your endorsement. *Dr. Elliot* may be fond of freedom *for himself*; but that he really cares one button for it for the suffering and dehumanized 4,000,000 of his dishonoured country, the 'Jew Appella' may believe, but most

assuredly not I. *I have met this gentleman before.*\* At least, there is every verisimilitude that it is the same; although, from my present and long-continued ill state of health, I cannot now hunt through my books to substantiate the fact. But some years ago, an American minister of the name of Elliot having presented himself in the Unitarian circles in England, with no very satisfactory credentials in regard to his anti-slavery position in America, the late excellent Mr. Estlin, of Bristol (with whose name and high character you must be acquainted), instituted some inquiries thereon, though no very clear conclusion was at that time arrived at. However, the gentleman impugned thought it worth his while, on returning to America, to publish a sermon in his self-vindication, which he did me the honour to send to me, though I cannot now lay my hand on it. But if it be (as I do not doubt) the same man, this late result, in opposition to your noble efforts, proves what a 'cassa nux' are all his grand anti-slavery flourishes. Oh, this brazen boast of hating slavery *in the abstract!*

"But go on, dear sir; you have great powers and a noble cause. It may be that, as the horizon is darkest, the light is nearest. And old as I am, even I cannot despair. But, for God's sake, no *half courses*, which only prove *whole curses* (pardon the pun). For have not the *compromises* of the fathers of the Revolution so turned out? Give my love to Samuel May, Jun., and my most honouring remembrance to Mr. Garrison, when you have opportunity. Mr. Wendell Phillips I know not personally, but in spirit and power I regard him as one of the noblest of God's creatures. Yours ever faithfully,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

Referring to this gentleman in a letter to me, he says, "The American anti-slavery papers are now beyond measure exciting. There is a Rev. M. D. Conway, Unitarian minister at Washington, quite a young man, who thunders with all the fire and genius of a Demosthenes and a Paul against the wickedness and ruin of

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\* It appears by a letter from Mr. Conway that Mr. Armstrong was mistaken about the identity of the Dr. Elliot referred to with the gentleman he had met of the same name.

slave-holding, over the very heads of slave-holding members of his congregation! He was born a Methodist, and a native of Virginia. His eloquence and courage are beyond example in our day. His congregation are aiming, but as yet dare not, to cast him out. They are waiting for the issue of the election of President. If Fremont comes in, then pro-slavery will be checked, if not check-mated; but if Buchanan, then Conway's martyrdom is certain."

"June 1, 1857," he writes in his journal,—“I must now leave it to the wisdom and power of abler hands and better times, to help on a world in the ways of truth, right, virtue and public happiness, which it still, in so many ways, and in such large degree, demands of *those* who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to feel, the grievous wrongs and maladies (not forgetting the dishonesties, hypocrisies and lies) under which society suffers, and for many a lustrum is likely to suffer, even amongst the most favoured portion of mankind.

"Friday, June 19. On Tuesday (p.m.) of this week, had a professional visit from Mr. James, who, in a very appropriate service, administered to me, my dear wife and my daughter Frances, the Lord's Supper. It may, or may not, be for the *last time* in this world; but such a religious recollection and refreshing could not but have a soothing and wholesome preparation of the spirit for its passage to *that* world where we shall be privileged to sit down to supper face to face in presence with the Lamb!"

But while life lasted, he felt he was best preparing for heaven by doing all the good he could on earth. He still was ready to defend his opinions when he saw occasion. And such a one he thought had arisen on reading some observations by Sir John Pakington on Unitarians in the course of his speech upon the Bill for abolishing the Jewish Disabilities. The speech was one of great interest, as Sir John confessed in it, with great candour, his entire change of opinion. He had formerly always voted against the admittance of the Jews to Parliament; he now admitted that the force of the reasoning on the other side had convinced him of his error.

*To Sir John Pakington, Bart., M.P.*

"Durdham Park, near Bristol, June 29, 1857.

"Dear Sir,—I am sufficiently read in the Constitution to be aware how delicate a matter it is to question anything which may have been spoken by an honourable Member within the walls of Parliament. Yet I trust I do not overstep the limits of modern usage, nor over-calculate on your indulgence, when I venture to say how grieved and distressed I was at that portion of your speech in the House of Commons on the Oaths' Bill (otherwise so remarkable for its frankness, ingenuousness and courage) wherein you argue that the Legislature is 'already unchristianized by reason of its admission thereto of Unitarians,' &c.

"I am truly amazed that nobody in the House, nor as yet out of it that I am aware, replied to this most untenable and, if used by any less courteous speaker than yourself, exceedingly offensive and monstrous position. Evidence, alas! of the one-sidedness of University education, which rigorously precludes to the educated laity of England all means of understanding controverted questions of theology, and, consequently, of candidly stating and allowing for the grounds of difference between one man and another in the various incidents of after life. It is surely a singular fact that, in the course of the same debate, an argument should be raised *against* the admission of Jews to Parliament, by upholding Milton, Newton and Locke *as believers in the gospel* which Baron Rothschild denies; and yet an argument be raised *in favour* of their admission, by shewing, in effect, that those great and good men were *not* believers in the gospel, inasmuch as, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, they were no better than the Unitarians of the present day, whose admission to Parliament, you contend, 'unchristianizes' and desecrates that assembly!

"May I respectfully ask, whether you are aware, or ever took the means of ascertaining, that, in *your* sense of that phrase, Sir Isaac Newton did *not* 'admit the divinity of the Saviour;' although, with all modern Unitarians, he religiously held his divine mission? And may I further beg leave to ask, whether you are aware that Faustus Socinus differed from the Unitarians



of the present day, in maintaining that *worship was due to Christ*; and consequently that the name 'Socinian' applied to the former is an utter perversion,—inoffensive when used, as by you, mildly and in pure mistake, but in the field of polemics invariably employed to annoy, to irritate and to wound? Finally, in regard whether to Socinians, if there be any such, or to Unitarians, as they are known in Europe or America, is there, theologically speaking, the slightest parallelism between the latter, who hold to Matthew xvi. 16, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' and the Jew who utterly denies that Messiahship, and looks for a Christ yet to come? Surely there must be something unsound in the faith and the statesmanship which can see, or affect to see, no difference between the two.

"With great respect I have the honour to be, dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG, A.B., T.C.D."

Sir John Pakington's answer is so highly creditable to him, that I make use of his permission to add it here.

*Sir John Pakington to Rev. George Armstrong.*

"Elmly Park, July 2, 1857.

"Dear Sir,—My absence from London has caused a delay of one or two days in my receiving your letter of June 29.

"I am sorry that anything said by me in my speech on the Oaths' Bill has given you pain, but it appears to me that you are under misapprehension of what I really said. The report in the *Times* was good, and I beg to refer you to that report.

"I did not 'argue' as you suppose, 'that the Legislature is already unchristianized by reason of its admission thereto of Unitarians,' &c. On the contrary, I argued that, for the reasons I assigned, the House of Commons would *not* be unchristianized by allowing a few Jews to have seats in it. But I added an opinion that, in the *sense* in which the admission of the Jews is opposed by those who contend that their presence would unchristianize the Legislature, the Legislature is unchristianized already by the admission of Unitarians.

"I know not how far this explanation may affect the feelings

expressed in your letter, but I trust you will believe that it was my sincere desire in making that speech, and I said so at the time, not to use any language which could give pain or just offence in any quarter.

"I beg to remain, dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

"JOHN S. PAKINGTON.

"P.S. If you decide to publish your letter to me, I request you to do me the favour to publish this answer with it."

Mr. Armstrong acknowledged this letter as follows :

"Durdham Park, near Bristol, July 3, 1857.

"Dear Sir,—I am entirely satisfied and very much gratified by your kind and obliging reply to my communication of the 29th ult. I had taken my impression of what you said from a weekly paper, which, however, adopted *literatim* the report of the *Times*, to which I have since turned with more attention than I had previously done.

"If anything could now induce me to place this short correspondence before the public, it would be my desire to make it known how honourably *you* disclaim the narrow construction put upon those words, now happily about to be repealed by the 'Oaths' Bill,' 'on the true faith of a Christian.'

"With great respect, permit me to remain always faithfully yours,  
"G. A."

During the month of July he was somewhat better, strong enough to be carried down stairs and to enjoy occasionally the sweet air of his favourite Durdham Down. One of the few entries in his journals describes such an interval of ease :

"Sunday, July 26. An enchanting day—the birthday of myself and my sweet child Rose ; the latter entering her tenth year ; myself—I dare hardly record in pen and ink . . . . . so soon passeth it away ! And yet I have rarely, if ever, been granted so happy, cheerful and enjoyable a natal day. At about two o'clock, I sallied forth in my wheel-chair, with a large and pleasant escort, towards Mr. Goodeve's charming new residence near Cook's Folly. The fields were lovely, the views enchanting and the day delicious."

On the day before, he had written to Lord Brougham, with whom he was in frequent correspondence, and whose regard for him I may express in his own words written on the envelope which enclosed this letter, when he returned it, as requested, to Mrs. Armstrong—"that noble-hearted and excellent man."

"Durdham Park, near Bristol, July 25, 1857.

"My dear Lord Brougham,—Very humbly but very heartily I desire to be permitted to express, what so many must feel, their indelible obligation as well as admiration for the great services conferred on the most friendless of mankind, the poor native African, in your powerful and demonstrative speech in the House of Lords on the evening of Friday, 17th ult.

"If anything could affect one with pain on such an occasion, it would be the reflection with what disastrous perversion so much light, knowledge and experience, could be set aside, and the worse instead of the better cause be advocated with such *levity* and heartless sophistry as it was in the *Times* newspaper, in commenting on this subject in its impression of the 20th of this month.

"It was certainly gratifying to find that Lord Clarendon had been for a considerable period in *earnest* communication with the French Government, and urging on them the wise and humane views in regard to African (free?) emigration entertained in common by your Lordship and by him. But alas! I fear it will result that the implied praise I have given to Louis Napoleon—'our illustrious ally,' as Lord Malmesbury calls him,—in the short printed paper I have the honour to enclose, was rather premature or misplaced. On a ruler so completely the creature of *expediency*, in its *narrowest* sense (for in its best and broadest sense I hold it to be the true guide of human actions), what dependence indeed can be placed?

"I should feel deeply interested in hearing the opinion which such a man as Dr. Livingstone might entertain of the injurious influence, or otherwise, of the meditated form of 'traffic' in human cargoes on the coast of Africa.

"With the dreadful spirit of money-getting ('recte si possis ;

si non, quocunque modo') which we know to prevail in America and among the Spanish races, I own I look with mingled horror and despair on the proposed policy of France, which is calculated to open so many facilities to all sorts of adventurers; and—not least of its mischiefs—to confirm in their prejudices the slave-holders of the Southern States, who, more recently especially, have insisted on the necessity of African slavery in order to American prosperity. Fortunately for the world, there are yet men,—watchmen on the towers of our British citadel,—who have strength and power spared to them to sound the alarm, and place the nations on their guard against the revival of the worst and darkest of all the forms of human crime and suffering. May they still long be spared to add to the grandeur of their fame by increasing devotion to the loftiness of their mission!

"I have the honour to remain, my dear Lord Brougham,  
always most truly yours,                   "GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

About the same time he writes to me by the hand of his daughter, being too weak to hold a pen himself,—

"Write me a long letter and tell me have you had an opportunity of sending my letter to Mr. Lewes, and have you been able to look into his new edition of the 'Biographical History of Philosophy'? Be sure to do so if you can. There seems also to be coming out a more advanced work on the same subject, and with the same views (?) by a Mr. Buckle, which meets with the grave and learned approval of the *Saturday Review*. Pray take a bird's-eye view of it and report to me. I own I am more interested and less awed at the thought of an inspection of Lewes' work. But they are both so seemingly à propos to my late, and, if I have strength to go on, my still pending conflict with the intuitionist dreamers, that, were my strength more equal to the task, I should rejoice in seeing either of them. What a Maelstrom of horrors and perils we have been suddenly launched into in the East! It is fearful to think of."

I answered his letter in person a few days after its receipt, and saw him for the last time. The day was a lovely one at the end of the month of July, and, as the heat was tem-

pered by a pleasant breeze, he expressed a wish to go out in the garden. I helped to carry him down stairs and put him into his wheel-chair, and then drew it to a shady spot where he could see the view across the downs. He looked dreadfully ill, but talked so cheerfully. "What a sweet air," he said; "how lovely the country looks, with the bright sunshine and the clear blue sky! It is a beautiful world after all, my friend, as dear Channing said, and dear Paley too—or poor Paley, as some of our friends call him." We formed a group around him—his wife, his children and myself—and, filled with consoling thoughts of God and goodness suggested by his conversation, we passed a happy hour; lulled into false security by his animated voice and active mind, we scarcely recollected by what a slender thread he held his life.

I left for London in the evening, and a few days afterwards the receipt of the following letter told me, in the touching language of filial affection, the sad story no words of mine could tell to others half so well:

"Durdham Park, August 6, 1857.

"I can hardly tell you how glad mamma and I are that you were all here together a few weeks ago. It was such a pleasure to dear papa to have you here, and if you and Mrs. H. had put off your visit as you proposed, it would have been too late, as he died this morning at about half-past five o'clock.

"He had been particularly well lately, until last Friday, when he was rather asthmatical in the evening. On Monday he was very ill, but the next day he was rather better, and we hoped it was going to be quite a short attack. But yesterday evening he was much worse again, until this morning at one o'clock, when he fell asleep. About five, he awoke and asked for some brandy. When he had taken it, mamma, who was supporting his head, as she often did, observed a sudden change come over him. She asked what was the matter, but he fell back in her arms without saying a word."

They laid him in a sweet spot in the beautiful cemetery of

Arno's Vale, a spot he himself had chosen. The day of his funeral was fine, and many were the unbidden mourners assembled to witness the last sad offices. The serene aspect of the place of rest, heightened by the genial sunshine, the hushed voices and the tear-filled eyes, all seemed to proclaim that it was indeed a good man who was that day added to its silent tenants.

"Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
 One set slow bell will seem to toll  
 The passing of as sweet a soul  
 As ever looked with human eyes."

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"Since we deserved the name of friends,  
 And thine effects so live in me,  
*Here* part of mine may live in thee."\*

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\* Tennyson, "In Memoriam."

# APPENDIX.

**ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE, &c.**





## APPENDIX.

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### ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

*Mr. Armstrong to his Father.\**

“Paris, September 1, 1815.

“MY dear Father,—Since five o'clock on Wednesday evening last, we have been in this city. The day after our arrival, we went to inquire for letters at the post-office, and were much mortified at not finding any intelligence from home, notwithstanding Andrew's entreaties not to neglect writing to the 'poste restante,' Paris. Hoping that all our friends in every quarter are going on well, I shall now give you a sketch of our proceedings from the period to which I brought you in my last letter from Brussels. I believe that letter was chiefly confined to Ghent, and our journey there. From that place we departed on the 24th ult., and for the first time knew what a diligence was; I think I gave you some notice of it in my last. However ridiculous they are to an English eye, they are by no means so contemptible when you know them better; they travel generally between four and five miles an hour, and afford very good accommodation; the front part holds three, and is like a gig, with an apron and a head, which is provided with curtains to screen you from the weather; the inside is clean and commodious, holding

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\* See *ante*, p. 6.

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having recovered from their wounds, and, among the rest, Major Gerard, who had been in a most dangerous state. You may suppose we were anxious to see Waterloo above every other spectacle which Brussels or its neighbourhood could afford. Having hired an open carriage and procured a printed plan of the battle, we set out there on Saturday morning, the 20th. The road lies through the great forest of Soignies, and brings you through its breadth only, which I dare say is five miles; its length exceeds that considerably. The village of Waterloo just lies at its termination, about nine miles south-west of Brussels; and this is the reason why it is called the Battle of Waterloo, the action having only reached to a little place farther on, about a quarter of a mile, called Mont St. Jean. Here we were shewn the church, where are two tombs erected by the surviving officers of the 1st Guards, foot, and the 15th Light Dragoons, to the memory of their departed comrades; the former regiment lost twelve officers, all of high rank. We were next shewn the house where the Duke of Wellington slept and wrote his despatches the day after the victory, the 19th June. At Mont St. Jean it was we saw the first indications of a battle; a mound of sand by the side of the road, in the figure of a grave, announced to us the field of death. To the left of the road we soon discovered many of such mounds, under each of which lay hundreds of the slaughtered French. Nearly in the same place, to the right, and in the same numbers, were seen the receptacles of their hapless victors; and while we trod the tombs of 50,000 dead, all was silence and doleful tranquillity, where the thunder of two contending and inveterate armies had roared but two months before. The ground where the day of the 18th was spent is a spacious plain, and belongs to a *Scotchman*, who took it as a farm two or three years ago. There was a great deal of corn on it, which was entirely destroyed by the action; part of this has been turned up with the plough since, but the greater part still shews the decayed and broken straw of the corn, and the innumerable footsteps of commingled crowds,—this seen the plainer, as it had rained the whole of the 17th. Notwithstanding the field has been searched so repeatedly for everything

worth notice, we frequently met with fragments of muskets, bits of caps and helmets, and in one place found the tattered plumes of a Scotch regiment. The place, called *La Belle Alliance*, is merely a little inn on the left of the road as you go from Brussels, about half-a-mile beyond Mont St. Jean. This was the farthest point, or very little farther, to which Bonaparte himself advanced. It was a commanding position, as it gave him a view of the whole engagement; and here it was he first beheld the Prussians advancing towards the village of Wavre, to his right, when he exclaimed that all was lost. This was about six o'clock on the evening of the 18th, and the battle closed at nine by a precipitate retreat of the French, who, however, were pursued by the Prussians, who were fresh for the work, as long as there was light. Bonaparte, as you may have seen in the paper, had a peasant by him most part of the 18th. He obliged him to ride with him to shew him the country, and of course exposed him to all the dangers of which he himself partook; in return for which, he *liberally* presented him with a Napoleon piece of twenty francs! We saw his son, who told us the whole history. From *La Belle Alliance*, we crossed the fields on our right to the castle, or mansion-house, and garden of Hugomont. This place had been first occupied by the French, who lost it twice and as often regained it, till at last the British set fire to it, and left it a complete heap of ruins. Of these latter, there were 4000 about the house and in the garden, which was well covered by a wall and a thick hedge. Of this, the French could not get possession at all, though their numbers amounted to 10,000; they were in an orchard outside, where indeed it was miraculous that a single person could have escaped the overwhelming fire of the English from behind the garden-wall. There is not a tree there, however small, which happens to be still standing, that is not pierced and shattered in fifty places; there are more marks of havoc in this spot than in any other we saw. Crossing from hence in another direction over the fields towards Mont St. Jean, where we left our carriage, we were several times obliged to use our handkerchiefs to escape the sepulchral smell which often drifted with the wind from the scattered burial-places

everywhere around us. Considering that the bodies in general were only deposited two feet under the surface, it is surprising the air was not much more infected. Is it not strange, at least is it not deplorable, that rational, thinking men can devise no other means of adjusting their pretensions than by butchery,—that the species to which Bacon and Newton belonged should be so degraded and ferocious as to make killing a science, and to find a triumph in ruin and in blood? If we believe there is a God at all, it is impossible that He should be indifferent to the government of this part of his universe; and unless we suppose Him to be a malignant Deity, we have a right to conclude that all these things have been throughout intended as means to ultimately wise and benevolent ends; though what those ends are, and how the means apply, how far they may be connected with other parts of the great system of things of which we partake, must remain a mystery till the consummation of all things.

“The day after our visit to Waterloo, we visited the palace of Lacken, belonging to the King of the Netherlands, about a mile from Brussels. It is more remarkable for the richness of its furniture and the beauty of the flooring, than for the number or the size of its rooms. The furniture, indeed, both for splendour and variety, surpasses anything I ever saw; part of it was provided by Bonaparte, who resided there for some time; and it was again to have received him if he had effected his design upon Brussels. On Monday, 28th, at two o'clock in the morning, we left that city for Paris. We took the road to Lille, it being safer and more frequented by English travellers than that by Valenciennes, Mons, &c.; the former of these having only lately surrendered. We reached Lille, a distance of sixty-six miles, at eight in the evening. Here we had little to explore, and but little time at our disposal; all we knew was that it was a large fortified town. We had two or three large gates to pass through, terrifying from their strength and gloominess, guarded by a company of soldiers, whose officer carefully examined our passports. At five in the morning, we started for the great capital; and from our anxiety to become again settled, we had to endure the inconvenience of being packed together,

literally packed, in a kind of basket fitted to the top of the diligence. This was the more formidable as we had to be out under the chilling dew by night, and the scorching heat of the sun by day. At ten on the evening of the first day, we arrived at Amiens, half-way to Paris. Here are some English troops stationed, the Twenty-third Dragoons, &c. Throughout the whole of the line from Lille to this place, you meet with a uniformly ugly country, very flat, but thinly wooded, and covered with immense crops of poppies, which they use for oil. All along the way we observed multitudes of windmills, and in the neighbourhood of Lille alone there are not less than five hundred.

“ At Amiens we were set down at the most miserable little inn you can imagine, in order to regale ourselves, to a supper-table, mean and starving to the last degree. I should have been sorry had you been there, particularly as we had yet a distance of seventy miles to go on pretty much the same kind of fare. After a short delay we resumed our journey, and daylight soon disclosed to us a country of a much superior description to any we had yet seen on the continent; it was much like Shropshire, being varied with hills and dales in agreeable succession, and enriched with almost interminable forests. In the centre of this tract stood the little town of Clermont on an eminence, which gave it a very pretty effect amid the surrounding scenery. There we breakfasted—I mean we stopped to breakfast; but such a breakfast! and such a reception as we met with in every respect in this apparently inviting little *stye*, only raised in us a mixture of ridicule and indignation at their daring to put themselves in competition with England for an instant! The difference between Flanders and France with respect to the inhabitants is indeed most striking; we had met with nothing in the former country to lead us to expect so *filthy* a contrast along the line from Brussels to Paris. From Clermont, in appearance so fresh, so agreeable and so rural, we set out disgusted and disappointed; we had found within fifty miles of Paris what you would have looked for in vain in the remotest and poorest corner of reprobate Ireland. The country, however, continued to be very agreeable on to

Paris. We had nearly reached St. Denis before we met with anything like a thoroughfare. Now and then we saw curious-looking post-carriages, the drivers in a kind of livery, with great wooden boots covered with leather, and certainly as thick as the body of the wearer. At St. Denis, a principal outlet of Paris, we were somewhat elated at seeing groups of English soldiers. There are a considerable number of them quartered hereabouts. The whole northern boundary of Paris is occupied by them, and they have the city completely under command, by the possession of the heights of Montmartre, which, in fact, is nothing but a single hill, with slight fortifications, overlooking the city. The British are all under canvass; none of them are quartered within Paris, which, though it has given umbrage to some of the officers, is certainly a wise measure.

"We soon got over the intervening ground, and now at length found ourselves in the great city of Paris. Excepting a triumphal arch erected to Louis XIV., under which we passed, the entrance into Paris by this side, compared to Piccadilly, is as Sackville Street in Dublin to Polboy in Navan. High, irregular houses, with narrow, crowded, filthy streets, no foot-ways, and torrents of mire flowing through a channel in the middle of the streets. Upon reaching the 'messengerie,' or coach-office, a wonderfully crowded place, our fellow-travellers, who were mostly all English, quickly dispersed to different hotels; we got ourselves into one of a very indifferent description, but we only stayed there until we had time to inspect other lodgings. This we have done, much to our satisfaction; we are now in the Hotel de Louvois, convenient to the Palais Royal and most of the principal parts of Paris. We have four handsome, commodious rooms for three francs each a night. We banquet here and there at various coffee-houses and restaurateurs, of which there are upwards of one thousand in Paris, all crowded to excess. The English are everywhere to be met with; several officers have been communicative and obliging to us. As R. S. wished to take a different route, we are now quite separated. Of this I am not sorry; we meet quite often enough. Indeed I think he was perfectly right; for amid so many contending opinions and desires as there are

likely to be in a party so large as ours, and seated in the centre of so many different attractions, no one person can enjoy his own peculiar taste without endangering the peace of the company.

“ Such are the variety and importance of the spectacles to be seen in Paris, that the most insatiable curiosity might find matter to dwell on for a much longer time than we can command. The Palace of the Tuileries was of course the first thing we set about admiring. With the addition of the Louvre, which is connected with it, the gardens, quays and handsome rows of buildings in its neighbourhood, it forms altogether a magnificent combination. Amidst all its brilliancy, however, it has one most striking defect in my eye. The roof of the Tuileries itself, which is of great extent, is remarkably high and erect, and covered with small slates; while the garret windows which surmount the parapet all around, add still more to the poverty and bad taste of this part of the building. In the construction of the Louvre, this is not observable; a balustrade conceals the roof, which gives it a great superiority over the remaining part of this stately palace. If I were inclined to pursue my critique, I might remark the inelegance of the pavilion or *angular* dome, which forms the centre of the Tuileries. This dome is roofed with slate; besides, as the middle of a great range of building, it strikes me that the whole should extend and project in some manner, so as to fill the eye immediately on being directed to it; but no such thing; the projection of its colonnade is very inconsiderable; and, if so uninformed a judge dare pronounce, I should say that the Tuileries separately from the rest did not much please me. The inside, however, is enchanting. The brilliancy and stateliness of the apartments, as Johnson remarks of some of Pope’s poetry, ‘suspend criticism and enchain philosophy;’ the walls and ceilings glow with every decoration the painter and the gilder could bestow. In one room, which indeed is part of the royal chapel, there is a splendid painting of the Battle of Austerlitz on the ceiling. It represents General Rapp galloping towards Bonaparte with the news of his victory over the Austrians; the Emperor appears on a white steed surrounded by his staff, and so accurately are the light and shade



and distance of the several figures preserved in this masterly piece, that it is impossible not to admire it. At every turn some memorial of Bonaparte presents itself; and even were it worth while, it would be very difficult to remove them without effacing the whole, which I should hope, never will be attempted.

“ We saw the King going to chapel; he was quite close to us. I fear he is ill fitted to be an Atlas; the political globe will soon crush him; in fact, he is so bloated with gout and fat, that every step seems to be an effort. His countenance is mild and benevolent; and for a peaceable, well-regulated nation, I am sure he would be a valuable sovereign; but for a restless, vain, rapacious people like the French, nothing but the pageantry and sternness of a military tyrant can ever preserve them from disaffection and disorder. Bonaparte beautified their city, raised their fame, flattered their pride, but governed them with a rod of iron; and it is beyond a doubt that he was peculiarly fitted to govern them, had he not, like another Alexander, sighed for the conquest of the world. But to return to the King. Upon his entrance to the chapel, whither he had been preceded by a number of his courtiers, an officer cried out, ‘ Le Roi,’ when immediately every one rose, and the service commenced. Parties of the *garde du corps* patrolled the different passages and lined the galleries. These men seemed to have been instructed to pay attention to the English; for though we had heard it was necessary to have tickets of admission from some of the household, yet upon putting on a bold face, and upon their observing us to be English, they immediately let us pass, and one of them, a very nice-looking young man, assisted us in getting a good place. After the service, which lasted about half-an-hour, we followed part of the military, and some strangers like ourselves, through some of the royal apartments, where the company formed an alley for the King to pass. Here he was cheered with loud cries of ‘ *Vive le Roi;*’ and we, among the rest, raised our voices in honour of the poor, good-natured monarch as he hobbled by us. He wore a blue coat, with a broad pink sash across his breast, a white waistcoat with flaps, and black small-

clothes, with wide black gaiters. He went into a distant room, where we did not venture to intrude, but contented ourselves with rambling about the intermediate saloons, which were indeed magnificent. At the end of one large room stood a colossal statue of Ceres, apparently of solid silver; in another, the walls were hung with full-length portraits of Bonaparte's principal marshals, which were still suffered to remain, much to our surprise; some of the most obnoxious, however, have since been removed.

"I find if I go on describing everything in this way, and continue to offer any remarks of my own, that a volume might be easily filled; but this I will not undertake to complete without the prospect of a *liberal subscription*, one-half to be paid in hand and the other upon publication; and yet I doubt whether anything could induce me to offer my thoughts to the public on a subject already pre-occupied by so many tourists. I shall therefore reserve my labours until I have visited the Chinese Archipelago, or some other quarter hitherto undescribed.

"As my descriptions must be brief, I shall now hurry off to St. Cloud, Versailles, &c. Upon recollection, however, I think it would be an unpardonable derangement to proceed to them before I have given you an idea of the Louvre Gallery. This of course was among the first objects that attracted our notice. About four o'clock in the afternoon is the usual time for repairing to this unrivalled spot. To compare great things with small, this celebrated Gallery, like the library in Trinity College, occupies the entire side of a square. It is 1400 feet long, and hung with 1200 pictures. The eye is absolutely confounded upon first entering; the astonishing length of the room, the richness of the frames and paintings, the splendour of the burnished ceilings, altogether beggar description. But here the magic ends; none of our faculties can bear excess. Upon going down the room, such is the number of the pictures and the difference of style and subject, that the eye is almost sickened with variety; and I can safely declare I was more edified upon seeing two pictures of Mr. West's exhibiting in Pall Mall, than upon walking through a collection of all the

masterpieces in Europe. I was much more pleased below stairs, where an extraordinary display of statuary appears. The subjects are all ancient, except a very few by modern artists. Hitherto Italy, partly by former conquests, was the seat of Grecian as well as native sculpture; but Bonaparte brought every fragment of ancient marble he could meet with to Paris. Here you see pieces of sculpture more than 2000 years old,—the features, the attitude, the drapery, all done to admiration,—‘the breathing perfection of the Greeks’ is a common expression, and it is scarcely too strongly, though poetically, applied. There is one piece, representing a story from Virgil of Laocoon and his two sons destroyed by a serpent. The figures are larger than life, and yet the whole is composed of one single block of marble. Pliny, the Roman author, mentions this fact; it is to be the subject of an English Prize Poem in the University of Oxford next year. To view the Louvre with any satisfaction, one ought to go there every day during one’s stay, but for the short time we could spare, there were other objects in abundance to engage us.

“The streets alone, it may be supposed, were very amusing. The Palais Royal is a city in itself. It is a considerable square, all of uniform architecture, originally intended for the residence of the Duke of Orleans, but now converted into a scene of everything that can entertain or debauch the fancy. Except the coffee-houses, which are numerous, the ground-floor of every house contains a shop, with all its articles of every sort exhibited with the most captivating display; the story above is very often occupied by some kind of eating-rooms or gambling-tables, and debauchery of the most disgusting order is carried on in the garrets and under-floors. From these latter, the passenger on the flags is often saluted with music of various descriptions—trumpets, drums, fiddles, &c., which he hears through the iron grates over which he walks, each vying to seduce the unhappy frequenters of these detestable haunts. The scene of revelry commences here immediately after nightfall; foreign soldiers, servants, mechanics, musicians, obsequious waiters, with ale, coffee and liqueurs,—all form the most *hellish* herd the imagination can picture in these infamous vaults. I have said “amus-

ing," but then I meant the shops and passengers, and even with these, that man must have a very vacant and idle mind who could be long entertained with them. Groups of Prussians to be sure were novel; they smoked and swaggered, wore mustachios and looked fierce; but one soon got tired of all this; and, in fact, had it not been for a few more public places and exhibitions, I should have longed of all things to escape. We had yet to see St. Cloud and Versailles. They both lie on the same road, the latter about twelve miles from Paris. We engaged a kind of gig or cabriolet, which holds six, drawn by two horses, to take us there and back for about six shillings. We breakfasted at St. Cloud, in a tolerable inn at the foot of a bridge over the Seine. The middle arch of this bridge was blown up by the French in 1814, when closely pursued by the Prussians, after the battle of Montmartre; there is now a strong platform of timber laid across it. The Seine here is very beautiful, and the woods about St. Cloud, together with the village, form another very fine scene. The exterior of the palace is plain, but the apartments in it are very elegant. It was Bonaparte's most usual residence, so of course it was everything that might be expected; but one room, the audience chamber, in point of chaste and well-chosen magnificence, exceeded anything we had yet seen; the walls were covered with the richest crimson velvet, with a gilded cornice and window drapery equally rich; chairs, tables, chimney-pieces, mirrors, all dazzling, yet simple and correct. From several of the windows we had beautiful views of Paris and the surrounding country. The woods and walks, however, are singularly defective; in most places the trees trimmed and straight; here and there odd fountains and statues; nothing of that grandeur, boldness or extent which you would see in Blenheim, or even in Headfort or Stowe. The same remarks are equally applicable to the grounds about Versailles. A stiffness and bad taste pervade the whole; but it seems to be peculiar to the continent; every country villa is in the same way.

"The palace of Versailles has been in a ruined state ever since the revolution, of which some principal scenes were acted here. It is wonderfully extensive. You go from one room to another,

almost in endless succession, with little variety, except an opera-house, a chapel, and an immense promenading gallery, all very grand, no doubt, but not near so much so to my mind as St. Cloud, or the palace of Lacken at Brussels. We went on from Versailles a little farther to view another pretty little palace, called Trianon, given by the celebrated Madame de Maintenon to Louis XIV. It is small and neat, and well furnished with paintings. Here we dined in a nice little parlour, attached to the porter's lodge, who himself attended us in his royal livery. After dinner, we set off for Paris, and on our way passed through the Bois de Boulogne, where the British camp lies. Here indeed is a very novel and interesting scene; tents scattered through the woods, stands of arms piled up before them, soldiers lighting their fires, dressing their food, cutting down timber, &c., some drilling, and perhaps a band playing; in one place, a dragoon regiment leading their horses from water; in another, a guard relieving,—altogether, under the mellow shade of evening, forming a most picturesque and unusual spectacle. We had for the first and probably for the last time a distinct view of what is called 'bivouacing.' This camp extends itself all round the northern parts of Paris, and includes St. Denis and Montmartre, probably a space of eight or ten miles. At the extremity of this Bois de Boulogne, next to Paris, where it takes the name of the Champs Elysées, the Duke of Wellington has his house. Here we one day saw him walking in his garden in coloured clothes; he stood at the corner of it, now and then looking down the street. We easily knew him by the portraits we had seen of him. We had, however, a fine view of him some time after. A few days before our departure from Paris, we were directed to the house of Sir Charles Stuart, the English ambassador, in order to get our passports for England. He lives in the same house, though of course in different rooms, with Lord Castlereagh. As we drew towards this house, along the Rue St. Honoré, a gentleman passed us by at a quick rate, mounted on a fine bay horse, with a groom in handsome livery after him. We knew him to be the Duke, and we saw him turning up to the very place we were going. On our arrival there, we saw the servant

leading his horse up and down the court, and Lady Castlereagh's carriage, with four French hacks at the door, ready to take her off to the Russian review at Chalons. We entered the hall, transacted our business with the clerk, who was a Frenchman, as well as most of the servants about the place, and there very humbly asked permission to wait to see the company. We had not long sat down, when who should saunter down stairs but my Lord Duke. He walked quietly through the hall by himself, with his hands in his surtout-coat pockets, and we had the honour of seeing the Prince of Waterloo pass within a couple of yards of us. In a few minutes afterwards Lady Castlereagh came down; she got into her carriage in high spirits, and drove off in great style.

"I believe this nearly concludes our visit to France; anything further I must reserve for the fire-side. I shall only add here, that if I had seen as much more as I have, and as much more again, I should still remain more than ever attached to my country, its religion and laws. I trust this will, with all its defects, be welcome from," &c. &c.

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#### BIBLE CONTROVERSY IN IRELAND.\*

*To the Editor of the Irishman.*

"Belfast, March 1, 1825.

" 'Give me the liberty to know, to utter, to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberties.'—*Milton's Areopagitica.*

"Sir,—I am aware that you have much to occupy your thoughts at the present crisis; events of great magnitude affecting the Catholics of Ireland are pressing upon the attention of every politician in the empire, and I shall therefore trespass in as limited degree as possible on yours.

"I claim your candour, as an appellant in your own great cause to the public opinion, for admission into your columns of the few following remarks, and I claim your credence when I

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\* See *ante*, p. 14.

declare to you that I am an energetic friend to that cause, as well as generally to your avowed political opinions. I am not to be met, therefore, if you do meet me, by any declamatory matter as to my supposed hostility to your views, or the imagined illiberality of my political sentiments in general. I address you participating deeply in all the heroic sentiments of liberty which have been repeatedly and forcibly proclaimed in your spirited print, proclaimed by the most eminent members of the Catholic body, and proclaimed in the most distinguished and interesting association of that body which has ever been assembled in this country. I address you, therefore, as a friend, since I would hope a common feeling binds us; but I profess to be the friend of no man on political grounds, beyond the connecting force of principle; and so far only as those principles which I judge to be really and consistently free are advocated by him, I am his friend, and no further.

"Sir, it is the misfortune of the controversy in which you are engaged, that on both sides of it there stand the most remarkable and glaring inconsistencies. On the side of power, there is the perpetual and plausible appeal to the *slavish principle of Rome*; on the side of the oppressed, there is the persevering and glorious assertion of the *sacred rights of conscience*; the former forgetting that in the spirit and the letter of their Establishment, mitigated as it has been by the progress of enlightened opinion, there are traces to this day of the most enormous assumption over the liberties of the human mind;\* and the latter apparently insensible to, nay extolling, the intolerable bondage they are themselves submitting to, at the very instant they are pleading the unalienable right of every man to adhere unmolested to the religion he prefers!

"Sir, as a politician, as a philosopher, impelled as I believe by a benevolent and enlightened religious theory, I pray for the success of my Roman Catholic fellow-subjects in their appeal

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\* "For the spirit, take the 2nd and 41st verses of the so-called Athanasian Creed, illustrated beyond the possibility of evasion or equivocation by the 27th verse of that edifying composition; for the fact, take the debate on the Dissenters' Marriage Bill in the House of Lords last session."

to the Legislature of the country, but I have watched with a painful vigilance the public declarations of the active members of that body. That they have not always been consistent nor always prudent, it would be unreasonable to complain; *humanum est errare*—they are men and must often err; but for the inconsistency to which I have alluded, I own I find it more difficult, if not impossible, to devise an apology.

“There are ‘the rotten parts’ of our political fabric, on which no prudent friend of things as they are is very prone to expatiate; do not then, I beseech you, expose the rotten parts of *your* cause. Talk of conscience, talk of rights, tell of your abhorrence of religious oppression; it is animating and hopeful to hear of Roman Catholics so talking; but, in the name of common sense, in the name of God, mix not up with these glorious topics an appeal to the triumphs of *your priesthood* over the advocates of a general dissemination of the sacred Scriptures. I know well the kind of persons those advocates in general are—intolerant enough, Heaven knows, in their own way; but they really profess the more rational cause. I know that they are enthusiastic, and expect over much from their own exertions; I know that the Bible is in many parts—though not the most important—a difficult book; I know that a popular commentary resolving merely these intricacies, without insisting very far, if at all, upon doctrinal expositions, would always be eminently useful and desirable; nor do I doubt that many of those individuals hold opinions unfriendly to the political claims of the Catholic body, and that they therefore propose with a very bad grace to propagate spiritual blessings amongst a class whom, as far as their individual wishes can operate, they are parties in degrading.

“I am fully sensible of all these things; but I think that if they were to be alluded to at all in a political assemblage such as, I may probably now call it, the *late* association, they might have been opposed to them, in a sober and manly way, by some talented persons in that assembly, without expatiating, to such a length and with such zeal and reiteration as they have done, upon the triumphs, ‘the innumerable triumphs,’ as Mr. O’Gor-



man's appeal of the other day ostentatiously described them, on the part of those speakers who had, I must say, so *revolting* a cause to sustain.

"For, after all, supposing, nay admitting, their arguments to have been completely successful, *ad hominem*, what, let me ask, beyond this, was the amount and tendency of all that the Catholic priesthood urged? Why, that those very Catholics who were so nobly struggling for *the rights of conscience*, and filling the empire from one end to the other, with *swelling sounds of freedom*, were themselves the subjects of the most abject religious thralldom that ever was imposed upon man; that they had absolutely no right whatever to choose a religion for themselves, nothing to do with the information of their own consciences; for where could choice be where no means of selection were allowed? How could a preference be shewn where all variety was interdicted? How were conclusions to be drawn where everything, from their first breath, was as irreversibly *imposed* as the laws by which that breath was first driven through their lungs,—where all but *authorised* reading was forbidden, and therefore all reasoning annihilated?

"I ask, Could any man living really value the privilege of discussion, and at the same moment be the champion of a communion which denounces the very name of discussion? I ask, Could *he* be indeed the friend of mind, reason, right, who bends beneath a system which rigorously, unalterably and for ever exterminates inquiry.

"Sir, I am aware that this authority is, under our laws, defective as they are, and indeed in most countries, as impotent in fact as it is outrageous in pretension. I can well believe that neither you, nor Mr. O'Connell, nor Mr. Shiel, nor Mr. Anybody else, who had an ounce of sense in his head, or a shilling in his pocket over and above the price of his dinner to buy a book, was ever yet controlled from indulging his taste by any deference to such authority, or ever yet thought of asking leave to read whatever he liked best; but I say that you act so in defiance of your Church, and I say that you are fortunate in living out of

countries where that Church has to this day sufficient power to command obedience to its dictates.

“Do not anticipate me. That *all* established Churches have been more or less guilty of this assumption I am most ready to acknowledge; but, pardon me for saying it, your own, with more effrontery and tenacity than any religious society that ever was known or heard of.

“As you value, then, the respect and support of all enlightened men—and to whom else among the British public can you resort for aid?—bury this unworthy part of your cause for ever. I ask for no disrespect to your clergy; they are, I believe, useful and venerable, though, as I think, most mistaken persons; but I ask you, in the sacred name of that Freedom to which you are in the habit of so ably appealing, to repress all exultation at, nay, all allusion to, their defences, however ingenious or learned or eloquent, of religious restriction,—of their right, under pretence of a delegation from Heaven, and for the sake of a chimerical unity, of administering to your mental wants in such manner and proportion only as *they* may judge fit, and, in one word, of dragging back the human mind in its career of inquiry and improvement.

“Do not be mocked by that preacher of paradox, Cobbett. Can you believe that that sagacious man is actuated by any other than oblique motives in crying up a system which, if it were to flourish to-morrow on the ruins of our imperfect Reformation, would for ever shut up *his* mouth from crying down the *parsons*? Do not cut the ground from under your own feet, by praising America in one breath and Rome in the next; by subscribing at one moment to the funds of a Society established for the promotion of Religious Liberty, ‘the principle of which’—I use Mr. O’Connell’s words, as reported in the *Morning Chronicle* of 28th December, 1824—‘the principle of which Society was exactly the same as that on which the Catholics acted,’ and extolling in the next those monstrous pretensions which are not less active at this hour than they were at any former period of your Church.

"Strange that, almost at the same moment that Mr. O'Connell is pledging the Catholics of Ireland in support of a Society whose notorious and enlightened object is the promotion of unlimited discussion in matters of religion, a 'Pastoral' should appear from under the hands of his Bishops, destructive of that, to them, detestable object, and that but a few months before (see extracts from the French papers, *Morning Chronicle*, July 10, 1824) an 'Encyclic' should come out from the Pope himself, in which it is laid down that to teach that a man may embrace such opinion as his own judgment approves, '*is the impiety of men in a delirium*;' and in which, moreover, this pious prayer is thrown up to Heaven—'May God arise, repress, confound, annihilate the mad licence of speaking, of writing and of publishing writings!' and no doubt the holy father looks upon himself as the legitimate instrument in the hands of God, or rather as his *alter idem* as far as in him lies, as well by secular as by spiritual means, so to confound and so to annihilate.

"Happy Mr. O'Connell who stood in College Green, instead of the precincts of the Vatican, when he offered his twenty pounds in support of the Society for the promotion of Religious Liberty! 'May God arise, repress, confound, annihilate!' Gracious Heaven! what an imprecation! O, Mr. Lawless, these are shameful doings; and O disguise, soften, suppress, bury, anything but *extol*, such doings. Good men grieve that your righteous cause should be embarrassed by the possibility on the part of others of referring to such things; but they both grieve and wonder at the fatuity on yours which would spontaneously ring them in the ears of freemen, and, at the instant you are nobly advancing claims in which they implore your success, would require them to endure an inconsistency and listen to principles as opposite to their venerated liberty as east to west or as earth to heaven—*penitus toto divisos orbe*.

"I am, Sir, your well-wisher,

"A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND."

## THOUGHTS OF REFORM IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.\*

*To the Bishop of Kilmore.*

"Bingfield, April 2, 1827.

"My Lord,—After considerable reflection, I have persuaded myself to address you on a subject upon which I venture to anticipate your concurrence, if you will be so condescending as to give it your attention; and to overlook the great liberty I take and the unusual frankness of which I am guilty in placing it before you. I am inclined to believe, my Lord, that no one can be less disposed than you are to hold complimentary matter at any very high rate, and I shall therefore trespass no farther in this respect than to assure you, most sincerely, that nothing but my conviction of the kindness of your character and the remarkable moderation by which I have observed your Lordship to be swayed in these very curious times, would have encouraged me to hazard a few observations, to which I solicit your indulgent attention.

"To the evidences by which we acquire a knowledge of religious truth, I have been, my Lord, not a little attentive, and having been always of an inquiring disposition, the controversy between Roman Catholics and ourselves has not failed to occupy some portion of my thoughts. My conclusion is, that of all the tenets of Catholicism, by far the most offensive and the most dangerous, if not the most irrational, is that of assuming to itself an infallible knowledge of truths which rest upon proofs only *probable* in their foundation.

"The direct result of this error, my Lord, is the rigour with which the Catholic Church denounces all conclusions at variance with its own; and that Church is certainly not inconsistent with itself in accounting as the enemies of God, and, under that character, as injurious associates for men, all who would disturb those decrees for which it affirms it has the unquestionable and indeed miraculous sanction of the Divinity Himself. This effect it is which renders the religion of Roman Catholics something

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\* See *ante*, p. 18.

more than merely ludicrous; it is capable of becoming positively dangerous; for the more sincere Roman Catholics are, the more they must feel themselves bound to resent those infractions which they regard as so many acts of distinct rebellion against the Majesty of Heaven.

“It would seem obvious, therefore, that, of all other weaknesses, this should have been pre-eminently guarded against by Protestants in constructing their theories of belief, at the period when they were proclaiming the co-ordinate right of every individual Christian to read the sacred Scriptures for himself and therefore to draw his own conclusions. There can be no question that to this extent the Reformation of Luther, and equally so the Reformation in England, was meant to be carried. In all periods of our reformed ecclesiastical history, the most eminent names in the Church have avowed this principle. Luther himself avows it; Bishop Jewell, our English apologist, avows it; and, not to mention any others, Archbishop Magee has recently and solemnly testified the same in the face of Parliament and the empire.

“Now this being the case, I really conceive that, in the controversy with Roman Catholics, the only difficulty which is not completely open to annihilation is their retort upon ourselves of that absence of charity, and that unforbearing and presumptuous spirit of judging of opinions at variance with our own, which characterizes a certain portion of our Established Liturgy.

“Your Lordship cannot but anticipate the particular portion I allude to. You will at once and rightly conjecture that I mean the Athanasian Creed; and as one of those occasions is shortly to arrive when our Rubric appoints this extraordinary formulary to be publicly recited, my object in addressing these remarks to your Lordship is to entreat of you most respectfully, but most earnestly, to consider whether it be desirable to permit this formulary to be so recited in the particular church which is more immediately under your control. I have been gratified at finding on several occasions that the reading of this Creed has been omitted in that church, and, I am convinced, it has so happened with your Lordship’s entire approbation.

“ My Lord, I cannot suppose you to hold that such a recitation can be edifying to the people ; not a soul of them comprehends it. How indeed should they ? when doctors themselves have differed so egregiously, not only with each other, but with the terms of the Creed itself, in their endeavours to expound the doctrine for whose protection it is alleged to have been invented.

“ Not to refer, my Lord, to works of controversy, we have in Tindal’s Continuation of Rapin, principally taken from Burnet, a memorable instance of theological discrepancy in high places, when South and Wallis, with Oxford at their back, stood out for, ‘ confounding the persons ’ against Sherlock, who insisted on ‘ dividing the substance ; ’ and who said he would undertake any day of the year to procure twice as many wise and learned men to retort upon the University the charge of ‘ false, impious and heretical,’ which they had brought against his doctrine ?

“ It is known, my Lord, that Waterland next interposed in order to place the thing for ever upon the most sure and indisputable grounds ; but it is remarkable that no less a judge than Bishop Warburton has left it as his opinion that, after all, the single circumstance which Waterland had succeeded in placing beyond dispute was his own dulness. Now, my Lord, ‘ Shall fools rush in where angels fear to tread ? ’—in other words, shall any ordinary congregation pretend to have any edifying convictions or any consistent notions,—above all things, shall they unblushingly damn their more fallible and hesitating brethren, upon a subject which has divided the most orthodox and metaphysical heads which have ever undertaken to penetrate into this mystery ? And here I am led to observe that there are indeed some portions of our Athanasian Creed which are sufficiently intelligible to the meanest capacity ; and one might suppose it is precisely because they are so plain that divines have thought it necessary to assure us that they are not at all so ; and that, standing as they do, they mean to all intents and purposes absolutely nothing :—a vain attempt ! except so far as it may indicate that they are, more particularly at the present conjuncture, thoroughly *ashamed* of those particular portions,—I

mean the *damnatory clauses*. I must honour them for this feeling; but I verily believe there is not an unsophisticated hearer in the world who would think of detaching these passages from their obvious connection with the Creed itself. Of all other portions, these are the last which the people feel any difficulty about; of all other portions, these are the passages which in their natural and unforced construction are fitted to be immovably rooted in their minds, and which, should they leave any practical impression at all, must inflict the worst of all possible lessons. In truth, this attempt can never succeed, to convince the people that these clauses are no part of the Creed, or that this damning—an unseemly intrusion, my Lord, under any pretence in offices of devotion—is *only* dealt out against those who refuse their belief to the universal, catholic and fundamental propositions of the Christian faith. Bishop Burnet has failed,—Archbishop Magee has failed,—Dr. Millar, of Armagh, has failed,—and so must every man fail, to convince the common sense of mankind that these denunciations of eternal wrath are not distinctly annexed by our Church to the non-belief of that particular exposition of her doctrine which is there recorded. The Church declares that, at our eternal peril, the catholic faith is to be believed. She then declares what the catholic faith is, and by consequence unequivocally declares her persuasion that all who reject that exposition must incur the penalties denounced in the beginning, the middle and the end of this truly singular document.

“In truth, my Lord, these evasions do but testify how painfully sensitive we are to the *stigma* which the Athanasian Creed affixes upon a Church which is sufficiently disposed to reproach a certain other Church, with her “*extra quam nemo salvus*,” and which, by disavowing all claim to infallibility, plainly acknowledges that she *may* be wrong.

“Now I would only put it to any candid and reflecting man, how it is in the nature of things to reconcile with this admission a form which announces with such harrowing confidence eternal penalties on the heads of all those who, in their conscientious

perusal of the Scriptures, may happen to deviate from the conclusions of the so-called Creed of Athanasius?

"I would only ask of such, whether it be really and truly Protestant to concede the right and acknowledge the capacity of private persons to read and interpret the Holy Scriptures, and then to affirm, with all the unqualified assurance of an infallible judge, that 'without doubt' that person shall perish everlastingly who differs in his ideas of the catholic faith from those which are propounded by our Church in the unparalleled symbol of which we complain.

"The truth is, my Lord, we found this symbol with the Romish Church, and there we should have left it. This foundling, for such you are aware it is, was procreated under her own system; and to her ready and anxious adoption we should have left the undivided burden of its support. With her, it would have thriven in perpetual harmony with her acknowledged and ordinary progeny, happy in requiting the generous care by which it was saved and fostered. To us it has ever been a troublesome bantling, and has enjoyed but little of the affection and conformed to none of the habits of the family with which it has been so inadvertently permitted to associate. If, as the parable in the Gospel represents it, the putting 'a piece of new cloth upon an old garment' were decidedly imprudent, it strikes me that the reverse of this process, the piecing of a new garment with an old rag, would be hardly less irrational. Appearances would ill consort, and the expedient would prove to be neither useful nor ornamental.

"In plain language, I apprehend there can be nothing more certain than that, in the calm and reflecting moments of the wisest of her members, this Creed has been at all times regarded as totally irreconcilable with the genius of our Church. In the very first of our homilies, we find a passage which, by implication, must strikingly condemn it—'Humility will not presumptuously and rashly define anything which it knoweth not,'—a passage, by the by, which is almost the identical language of St. Austin, who, in exhorting to moderation, has these words,



‘*Neutram partem affirmantes sive destruentes, sed tantummodo ab audaci affirmandi præsumptione revocantes.*’ Again, in the same spirit, ‘Surely,’ says the celebrated Cudworth, in a passage which he too has borrowed from Hilary, ‘Christ came not to ensnare and entangle us with captious niceties, and to puzzle our hearts with deep speculations, and lead us through hard and craggy notions into the kingdom of heaven.’ And lastly, but not least, Archbishop Wake, who in one of his sermons candidly avows, ‘It has never gone well with the church of Christ since men have been *so narrow-spirited* as to mix the controversies of faith with their public forms of worship, and have made their liturgies, instead of being offices of devotion to God, become tests and censures of the opinions of their brethren.’

“But, my Lord, we need not confine ourselves to implication. I humbly submit that the repugnance to this Creed is not more universal than it is unequivocal and express. Kings, bishops and people have been equally appalled by it. Tillotson wrote to Burnet that he wished to God ‘we were well rid of it;’ Bishop Tomline, in a work with which all candidates for orders are supposed to be familiar, ‘declares that its denunciations are both unnecessary and presumptuous;’ the episcopal Church of America has renounced it; and it is notorious that the late and, I believe, the present King could never endure it.

“My Lord, I shall say no more. The case is too plain for any lengthened argument, and the only hesitation I can feel is, whether I may not have trespassed much beyond the bounds of etiquette in thus submitting to a person so much my superior in rank and age, a question of such delicacy and importance, and of which he must himself be so perfectly adequate a judge; and yet I cannot but confess that I entertain very strong hopes that, neither as a neighbour nor a clergyman, shall I be lowered in your Lordship’s esteem for the unusual frankness of which I am here guilty.

“My Lord, I feel myself, and I know that others feel—nay, I cannot doubt that your Lordship must feel, as a worshiper of God in spirit and in truth—an invincible repugnance to the saying ‘Amen’ to a confession which is so immeasurably at

variance with that first of gospel virtues, charity, and with that truly Protestant spirit which it was never so necessary to maintain uncorrupted as in our yet inexhausted, and but recently active, controversy with the vile maxims and overweening pretensions of that Church whose infallibility the adherents of the Establishment are accustomed to deride, and whose exclusive dogmas they would be thought to regard with unmeasured abhorrence. I have accordingly presumed to trespass thus far on your Lordship's attention, in the belief that it may be in some degree in your power, perhaps throughout your diocese—possibly by communication with your Right Rev. brethren, at any rate, in your own immediate church—to correct the distressing anomaly against which I have ventured to protest, and to repel that reproach with which our watchful enemies do not fail to arm themselves. *Nunc res ipsa vocat.* The Protestant clergy of Ireland are engaged in an arduous and very novel enterprize. Should they not 'lay aside every weight' which would incommode them in the combat? Should they not, as they hope for the blessing of God and the approbation of the really wise and good, while they are industrious in cleansing the spiritual eye of their Catholic brethren, be admonished by their blessed Master, and take care to remove, if not the *beam*, at least the *mote* which is in their own?

"Believe me, my Lord, with the sincerest respect," &c. &c.

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CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE FIRST EDITION OF  
"INFALLIBILITY NOT POSSIBLE."\*

*To the Rev. J. Blanco White, Oxford, late of Seville, in Spain.*

"Bingfield, Feb. 10, 1828.

"Sir,—I should feel much honoured by your acceptance of a volume, which I have directed my bookseller, Mr. Rowland Hunter, to forward to you on a subject upon which there is no individual living more capable than yourself of forming a sound

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\* See *ante*, p. 18.

opinion. You may perhaps find many particulars in which your superior information and sagacity will discern much to disapprove; but I cannot resist the temptation of testifying, by this small mark of my respect, the deep sense I entertain of the value of your labours in investigations so nearly connected with a considerable portion of the work which I take the liberty of presenting to you, and in which you will perceive that I have been not a little assisted by the very instructive materials which you have yourself supplied in the course of by far the most able and effective exposure of Catholicism which the present age has produced.

“ So far as the weakness, and, if I may so say, the *theoretical* tyranny, of that system are concerned, I believe no serious attempt has been made to invalidate anything you have advanced; the attempt would be abortive. Were politics out of the question, which alone keep Catholicism alive in these comparatively free countries, such a work would be rapidly triumphant. All that you have left us to wish, in *my* view of the subject, is that your powerful aid had been given to loosen the bonds of an otherwise invincible prejudice, by giving your suffrage for *the repeal of those provisions*, the removal of which, in the settled state of our constitution and in the enlightened character of our times, could be attended with no real hazard to the liberties of the nation; while their existence, less protective than vexatious, must raise a barrier against which even the talents and vigour of Mr. White must prove but a feeble resource. Upon this point alone perhaps can we be said to differ; upon all others connected with the Roman Catholic controversy, I willingly acknowledge you to be my master. Nor can I omit to say that in those pages where I have been necessitated to speak with severity of that Protestant bigotry which would claim for its own conclusions a monopoly of the favour of Heaven, and an over-certainty which differs in nothing from the infallibility it pretends to reject, I have the pleasure of anticipating your entire concurrence. Upon this point, that distinguished passage, p. 65, in the first edition of your work, against Catholicism, leaves me no room to doubt,” &c. &c.

*Answer from Rev. J. Blanco White.*

“Oxford, April 21, 1828.

“Sir,—I have lately received your very obliging letter of February last, and a copy of your work on the Roman Catholic controversy. I have to thank you for both, which I do most sincerely. Your argument both against the Popery of Rome and what may be called Protestant Popery is most ably managed, and your last letter is affectingly eloquent. I find that we differ on some very important points of Christian divinity, but I perfectly agree with you as to the spirit in which Christians should consider such differences. *Involuntary* error cannot be punishable by Divine justice; while to distinguish between wilful error and that which depends entirely on the understanding, is only possible to God. We should therefore take the words, ‘He that believeth not shall be damned,’ under the necessary qualification which the immutable principles of justice force upon them. Let us therefore not judge one another; and when we condemn error (i.e. what we conscientiously believe to be error), let us do it in Christian charity, ‘speaking the truth in love.’

“If any expression in my works has induced you to think that I ever intended to meddle with the *practical* question of what is called Emancipation, I must have failed in the attempt to convey my meaning. I am, indeed, fully convinced that a true Roman Catholic must be an unsafe legislator in a Protestant country; but whether, in the relative circumstances of England and Ireland, it would be *expedient* to grant legislative power to Roman Catholics, is a question far above my knowledge, and in which it would ill become *me* to take a part. A man, indeed, who has been at the point of death by arsenic, will not be very anxious to measure and qualify his language when opposing any one who would persuade people that there is no harm in that mineral. But it would not thence follow that he wished to interfere with the practice of medicine, or positively deny that taking a small dose of arsenic may, in some diseases, contribute to the recovery of the patient.

“I am, with sincere respect, your obedient, humble servant,

“J. BLANCO WHITE.”

*To the Right Rev. Dr. Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich.*

“Bingfield, March, 1828.

“My Lord,—I feel that in addressing your Lordship there is a bond of mind which has a greater power to unite men, than the opposing force of distinction in rank and distance of space can exert to sever them.

“I account it, my Lord, an unbounded satisfaction that, having devoted some portion of my time to the promotion of the cause of religious liberty in a country where there has hitherto prevailed so disastrous an absence of thought upon that great and interesting subject, taken in its fullest extent, I am enabled to submit them to your Lordship—to lay the fruit of my labours at the feet of a Prelate almost single in his devotion to that great cause, and nobly distinguished for his exemption from those qualities which have too generally characterized his ecclesiastical brethren, among whom he has been as a burning and a shining light.

“My Lord, you are aware of the controversies which have been agitating this portion of the empire within a recent period. I believe I have been the first who has distinctly attempted to shew that *both* the parties engaged in it labour under a common and momentous error. That error I have endeavoured to point out in the work of which I entreat the honour of your Lordship's acceptance; and whatever its demerits may be, I promise myself an indulgent reception of it from an exalted individual, not more distinguished for the amenity of his character in private, than for his dignified and intrepid avowal in public of those sentiments which he has gathered from *his* and *my* favourite authors, Jeremy Taylor, Locke, Hoadly and Jortin. My Lord, in being able to study the works of those eminent men, together with the Divine source from whence they drew their thoughts, your old age has been greatly blessed; for much as I would desire to behold the promised memoirs of such a father, drawn up by an affectionate and accomplished son, I pray to God the period may even yet be distant when I shall thus be gratified. *Sero in*

*cælum redeas*; and may your last hours be the tranquil termination of a life as useful as it has been long, and the commencement of an eternity of that joy in heaven which God has prepared for all those who have been his true and faithful servants upon earth!" &c. &c.

*Answer from the Bishop of Norwich to the foregoing.*

"Norwich, June, 1828.

"Dear Sir,—Upon my return to Norwich a few days since, your kind and acceptable present, which ought to have been forwarded to me, was put into my hands. I anticipate both information and pleasure from the perusal of it. The good opinion of individuals like you is the best reward which, on this side of the grave, an honest man can receive for doing what he believes to be his duty. It would be well for the Established Church if a larger portion of its ministers were animated with the same just and liberal ideas which are so forcibly expressed by you in the two first pages of your publication. This unfortunately is not the case; on the contrary, those narrow, contracted notions of civil and religious liberty, 'which are disappearing everywhere else, seem to leave their last footsteps before the altars of God and in the fairest seats of learning,' as is finely observed by Dr. Powell, in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge in my hearing. Among the laity, men of education, with very few exceptions, most readily admit that penalties and disabilities on the score of religion are as unjust and impolitic as they are inconsistent with the precepts and example of our divine Master, who came down from heaven to plant peace and good-will in this troublous world. For my own part, it affords me some consolation to observe that the number of those who feel disposed to keep pace with the times, and who understand the genius of a free constitution, increases every day,—so fast indeed, that I do not despair, old as I am, to witness the success of a cause which I have always had and shall never cease to have deeply at heart. I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"J. NORWICH."

*To the Rev. Dr. Channing, Boston, United States.*

“Bingfield, near Crosdoney, Ireland, March 21, 1828.

“Sir,—The incomparable writings with which you have benefited mankind upon the great subject of religious ratiocination, place you in the first rank of those to whom the gratitude and the homage of all thinking men are due.

“Deeply impressed with these feelings, I entreat you to accept of the volume, which I trust may safely reach you together with this. It is upon a subject the nature and occasion of which you will at once apprehend; the only merit I claim for it is that of impartially aiming at an end of which it is my firm belief no individual living could more zealously approve than yourself.

“Sir, you have given an impulse to this age, and, through it, to all ages to come: the next greatest benefit you can confer on the world is to provide, as far as in you lies, for the succession, in the same channel of exertion, of excellence as nearly as possible equal to your own. Lord Erskine has said, ‘After the gratitude which we owe to God for the divine gifts of reason and understanding, our next thanks are due to those from the fountains of whose enlightened minds they are fed and fructified.’ When I turn to your writings, I feel this sentiment in its fullest extent, and I think with unbounded satisfaction of the dignity you have conferred upon that country which is the freest in the world, and from whence mankind, I firmly believe, is destined to receive abundant accessions of religious and political light. May she continue to prosper and to be a beacon to the nations in the paths of freedom, religion and knowledge! May she continue to produce such sons as you upon her soil, and thus in every succeeding age augment the sublimity and force of that moral superiority she is rapidly acquiring, which must eventually banish every bigot and despot from the face of the earth! With the most ardent admiration and esteem, I have the honour to be,” &c. &c.

*Answer to the above from Dr. Channing.*

“Boston, July 21, 1828.

“Dear Sir,—Your letter gave me great pleasure. Many of

your expressions of approbation I am compelled by my self-knowledge to limit, perhaps I should say to disclaim. But whilst I question the soundness of the estimate which many make of my labours, I do not the less rejoice in the proofs which occasionally come to me that what I have written has been quickening and exalting to some of my fellow-beings. I have a deep conviction that Christianity was intended to communicate energy and elevation far beyond what we yet witness, and that our nature was made and is fitted for the sublimest influences of this religion. If I have helped to spread this conviction,—if I have awakened in any soul a consciousness of its powers and greatness,—if I have thrown any light on the grandeur of God's purposes towards his rational creatures,—if I have done anything to expose the monstrous error that curbs and chains are the indispensable and best means of educating the individual and the race,—or if I have vindicated for the mind that freedom which is the chief element and condition of its growth,—then I have accomplished the end to which I have devoted my powers. I thank you most sincerely for encouraging me to hope that I have not been wholly unsuccessful. I feel my poor labours (for I cannot estimate them very highly) recompensed beyond measure by such language as you have used; you have given me a kind of approbation which I may enjoy without injury to my virtue; for your letter breathes sympathy much more than it expresses praise. I thank you and I thank God for this. Truth, though not responded to, is still truth; but how are we strengthened and encouraged when, having sent it abroad, it comes back to us in tones which shew that it has penetrated the inmost souls of some at least who have heard it.

“The work which you sent me gave me much pleasure; it seems to me that you have taken the true and only defensible ground. Most Protestants betray their cause by virtually siding with the doctrine of infallibility; they are unwilling that Rome should thunder against heresy; they have no objection to the thunder itself, if it may only break from the clouds of their own orthodoxy. I heartily wish you success in your conflict with the spirit of tyranny and exclusion, whether in Catholic or Pro-



testant. I ask your acceptance of two pamphlets recently published by me. I shall be gratified to hear of the state of religion in your country; Ireland is an interesting region to us. Very truly your friend,

“WM. E. CHANNING.”

*To the Rev. Mr. Gilman, Charleston, South Carolina.*

“Bingfield, Crosdoney, April 2, 1828.

“Sir,—I had the satisfaction some time since of hearing from Mr. Aspland, the late conductor of the London *Monthly Repository*, the name and address of the able writer of the ‘Critical Synopses’ in that work. I feel particularly gratified at embracing the earliest opportunity of testifying my great admiration for his talents, and for the manner and temper with which they were so usefully exerted in those interesting articles.

“Accept, I beg of you, Sir, the small work which I have entrusted to Mr. Rowland Hunter, of London, to forward to you. It has been occasioned by theological proceedings in Ireland, to which you are probably not a stranger, as our newspapers and periodicals no doubt find their way pretty regularly to your distant region.

“I believe I am correct in asserting that no individual in Ireland had ever before made a stand for religious liberty in its wide and genuine sense, and abstracted from the immediate defence of particular views of doctrine. A favourable moment at length arrived—when discussion between Roman Catholic and Protestant divines became the rage—to vindicate the rights of man, and to snatch from the usurping hands of both the sceptre of infallibility which they had each presumed to wield. I should have thought it a fortunate circumstance had I enjoyed the advantage of an intimacy with so deep a proficient in reasoning and so great a master of language as you, Sir, while I was engaged in the work to which I have ventured to invite your notice. Imperfect as it is, I feel confident the intention of it must find favour with one whom I number amongst the ablest theological writers of this age, and who, with his illustrious countryman, Dr. Channing, must so dignify the land of his

birth by the talents and acuteness he has brought to the cause of rational religion and liberty. Sir, it would be a felicity to me of no ordinary kind to have the honour of a few lines from your pen; and a greater still, to be informed that in the new *Monthly Repository*, or some other accessible work, that pen is still to be employed in the same great cause which has hitherto engaged your attention. Calvinism could not long continue to abuse the understandings of men and debase the religion of the Redeemer, if perseveringly encountered by so potent a weapon.

“May the Father of lights invigorate the understanding, purify the will and stimulate the zeal of all those, whether in your or our hemisphere, whose desire it is to *reconcile religion with reason*, and to *cultivate reason in subservience to religion!* No undertaking at once so useful and so august could occupy the attention of man; and no language could express this sentiment in happier terms than those of the *Christian Cicero*, as Lactantius has not been inaptly designated—‘*Neque religio ulla sine sapientiâ suscipienda sit, nec ulla sine religione probanda sapientia,*’ &c. &c.

The reply to this letter has not been found among Mr. Armstrong’s papers.

*To Mr. Sismondi, Geneva.*

“Bingfield, near Crosdoney, July 2, 1828.

“Sir,—Although I have not yet the satisfaction of being so extensively acquainted with your excellent writings as I could wish, yet having enjoyed the perusal of your tract on the ‘*Progress of Religious Opinions in the 19th Century*,’ I take the liberty of testifying my gratitude for that admirable production, by requesting the honour of your acceptance of a small volume, which I have entrusted to Messrs. Treüttal and Würtz, of London, to forward to you. I am not aware that the position I take in that work, with respect to the parties engaged in the controversy upon which I have commented, has been pre-occupied by any former writer in this country.

“Multitudes of intelligent men there are in Great Britain

who, not less penetrated with the follies of Catholicism than the bigotry of its opponents, are at the same time strongly disposed to yield to their countrymen of that persuasion the political concessions which they claim. But it has happened on this very account that, from an apprehension of retarding those concessions, there has been literally no instance of any bold and open mediation between the parties who are, more particularly in Ireland at this present period, so energetically opposed to each other.

“ Now I think a fair opportunity has presented itself for a writer politically friendly to the Catholics, first, to conciliate them by a declaration to this effect; next, to state candidly, but forcibly, those reasons which must so powerfully influence the mind of a rational and upright man to reject the religion in whose defence they affect to be so very triumphant; and, finally, to do them the additional justice of exposing the preposterous bigotry and imbecility of those who have undertaken the cause of Protestantism and free inquiry in these countries.

“ It appears to me that this alone is the course which a truly independent and reflecting mind should adopt,—friendly to the rights and indulgent to the wishes of all parties, but compromising or suppressing no truth for the sake of any contingent good which might ensue. It really strikes me that those who are favourable to the emancipation, as it is termed, of our Catholics, should be the most active in exposing the untenable materials of which Catholicism is composed; since in any other hands not only must opposition be suspected of selfish and intolerant motives, but, when exerted by the orthodox party, must ever be enfeebled by the imputation to which they are exposed of that unforbearing, dogmatical and presumptuous spirit, for the exercise of which they might otherwise so justly condemn their Roman Catholic opponents. How far these ideas may be reasonable, or with what success I may have executed the design which has been suggested by them, I presume to solicit the honour of your consideration. I know, Sir, that your mind is not confined by seas or mountains; it embraces all times and all

regions. Our controversies cannot be unknown to you ; and it is my peculiar satisfaction and support that, in addressing so distinguished an individual, no friend to truth and toleration can be wholly unacceptable to his thoughts or unworthy of his condescension. With the most unaffected admiration and esteem, I am," &c. &c.

*Answer to the foregoing from Mr. Sismondi.*

"Geneva, October 27, 1828.

"Sir,—I have been very highly flattered by the gift of your book on 'Bible Controversy,' which I received two days ago, together with a letter of which I have every reason to be proud, and for which I offer you my most heartfelt thanks. It is highly gratifying to see in your island, in which religious controversies have been so long and so cruelly embittered by their connection with political power, the same questions taken up again with a liberal spirit of charity and conciliation. I feel, like you, Sir, that in the same time that the friends of civil and religious liberty must exert themselves to prevent their fellow-citizens being deprived of their civil rights for a belief which they follow in conscience, the same men must endeavour also to point out the errors and the danger of doctrines which do not pervert the understanding without endangering the whole system of morality. I do not admit an authority upon earth which may punish man for his belief ; and my trust in the goodness of God is such that I do not fear an erroneous belief shall ever be punished in another world ; but, at the same time, I feel that few opinions, few organizations of a priesthood, may be more dangerous to a well-organized civil society than the Catholic persuasion. Catholicism has ruined the patriotic cause in all the southern states of Europe ; and the conspiracy of priests has worked the downfall of the constitutions of Naples, Piedmont, Spain and Portugal ; the only danger which threatens still the states of Spanish America could be traced to the influence of their priests on an ignorant mob ; and, while demanding what is right for the Irish Catholics, I should tremble for the use they would

make of their right, if I did not hope that peaceful and philosophical controversy will begin to bear fruit as soon as oppression ceases, and that the example you have given will be followed. Man will always spurn and reject with all his might even what would be most beneficial to him, if forced down his throat; but when left to choose for himself, he seldom hesitates long in testing what is good. The whole drift of the book you had the goodness to send me is to establish the right inherent to man, as well as the necessity, to examine his own belief, and to rest only on the foundation of reason. Your arguments appear to me unanswerable, and the Catholics are not the only sectaries to whom they might be directed. I suppose the controversy can be maintained on the opposite side only by urging the consequences of your argument against all belief which implies contradiction, and which cannot therefore be grounded on examination and reason. My hope is that we are all, perhaps unawares and while bickering one against another, proceeding, however, towards a period in which all that is repugnant to reason, all that is derogatory to the goodness, justice, wisdom, ubiquity of God, will be abandoned on all sides, as being the human errors of a barbarous age and no part of religious belief. Calm controversy always tends towards that scope; for those who seek peace or persuasion always smooth down such tenets as would shock the reason or feelings of their antagonist. The controversy of sects, persecuting or persecuted, is always directed the contrary way; the one and the other pride themselves in making no concession in carrying their principles to their utmost limit. They say, then, like Pascal, '*Credo quia absurdum*,' or, like the man you quote, Loyola, '*Si quid quod oculis nostris apparet esse album, nigrum esse illa definit*,' &c. Both prided themselves in being unpromising with their enemies, and made themselves still more absurd than they were. Such books as yours have, then, the doubly advantageous scope, to convert the one, and to bring the other, who are not converted, to make at least gentle concessions. I have the honour to remain, Sir, with most profound and sincere respect," &c. &c.

*To John Bowring, Esq., London.*

“Bingfield, July 2, 1828.

“Sir,—I beg to be permitted to say that I have often observed with the deepest satisfaction the honourable and useful course of your public and literary life. The eminence of your attainments and the integrity of your character must render your adhesion to any cause in which the good of mankind is involved, an accession greatly to be desired. That accession I am happy to observe the friends of ‘civil and religious liberty all over the world’ have the advantage of unreservedly enjoying.

“That a mind so exercised and accomplished as yours, and a character, if I am rightly informed, so occupied in the busier scenes of commercial life, should have found in religious inquiries an additional and prominent subject of interest, must furnish new matter of praise with all those who perceive how much, not alone of the future, but of the present, welfare of the human race depends upon the ideas connected with, and the reasoning applied to, that prolific source of good or evil.

“That those ideas should be as rational as possible I can well believe must be your first wish, knowing that that which is most consistent with reason *must* be most conducive to the enduring interest of man. But precisely from this conviction it is that you, in common with all who feel and reason rightly on this subject, desire to promote an utter abolition of all restraints upon opinion, and to make the advancement of truth, what it can only eventually be, a result of the fair application of the mental powers of man. The more highly this result is appreciated, the more indignantly must every friend of truth behold the impediments which are opposed to it in the proscriptions and exclusions, the clamours and reproaches, which attach to the manifestation of certain opinions, many of which are kept in existence solely from the reaction occasioned by these vexatious and exasperating methods.

“It must therefore to every enlightened mind be less a matter of concern what the preponderating opinions of society with respect to religion at any given period may be, than that there be a perfect equality of liberty, the most unqualified per-

mission conceded to every human being, to avow and defend the opinions he esteems to be right, well assured that, if truth be ever to be attained by man, such and such only is the means by which he can arrive at it. It must, however, be obvious—a circumstance not always attended to by those who assent to the general truth of these views—that such opinions as infringe the rule laid down for the management of controversy, must be altogether excluded from the indulgence for which we would contend. Let the rule be, as suggested by Chillingworth, ‘I will think no man the worse man nor the worse Christian for differing in opinion from me, and what measure I mete to others I expect from them again.’ Would it not be a palpable contradiction to plead the very rule agreed upon for the toleration of an opinion which, in defiance of that rule, would condemn another both as the worse Christian and the worse man for thus differing? What society could exist, what laws could have force, were a similar paralogism to be applied to the fundamental maxims which govern the civilized world?

“But so it is. Those who contend for the unlimited right of private judgment are told they have nothing to complain of if, availing themselves of the liberty thus supposed to be presented to them, others should denounce the most unsparing judgments of God, and bring the deepest aversion of their fellow-men, upon those who would measure to all equal facilities for the formation and diffusion of the doctrinal, although not of the damnable, opinions they may have severally embraced. Sir, I have myself experienced this absurd retort in the bigoted criticisms which have been published in Ireland against the work which I have instructed Mr. Rowland Hunter to forward to you with my best respects, and in which I have endeavoured to demonstrate against the Roman Catholic and pseudo-Protestant polemics of this country, that ‘infallibility is not possible, and error is not culpable.’

“It is my lot to live at a distance from the literary circles, and I may be consequently not correctly informed in many particulars which it would interest me to know; but as I have happened to hear that you are considerably connected with the

management of the *Westminster Review*, I feel a satisfaction, not to be easily expressed, in presenting a testimony, however humble, of my respect for the person who has been instrumental, in whatever degree, in bringing before the world one of the most inestimable essays in our own, or any other language,—I mean that article on the ‘Formation of Opinions’ in the 11th No. of the Review.

“To that article I have, though briefly, yet with a feeling of the deepest admiration, alluded at p. 179 of the work of which I entreat the honour of your acceptance and perusal. At pp. 142, 143, and 183, 184, you will meet with observations of which I can confidently anticipate your approval,—observations which, if enlarged upon at more frequent intervals, and with the judgment and energy with which so many able and good men in your enviable circle could so effectively sustain them in the pages of the *Westminster Review*, would, I persuade myself, be in no long time of valuable service to the best interests of man, their religious and, with them, their civil rights and liberties.

“With the truest esteem, and with the hope that I may have the honour of a permission to communicate occasionally with so distinguished a friend of liberty and literature, I remain,” &c. &c.

*Answer to the above by Mr. Bowring.*

“London, July 7, 1828.

“Dear Sir,—It is impossible I should be insensible to the sound and generous sentiments of your letter, still less to the expressions of personal kindness towards myself. No reward can be sweeter, none meeter for those who have endeavoured to diffuse the principles out of which human happiness grows, than to meet with those who encourage them by their sympathies and by their co-operations. Every such individual is one link in the mighty chain which by and by will encircle all mankind, and be the conductor of the electric fluid of benevolence. Day after day, events are occurring which are preparing and will prelude a far better state of things than the last generation could have anticipated; and among the convictions which are likely to



work great changes, that to which you allude, placed on the widest possible grounds, so that no human being shall be excluded—the conviction that man is not responsible to his fellow-men for opinions respecting religion—that legislation has to do with acts and never with thoughts—that no disability, no preference, no distinction, should attach to forms of faith—is perhaps one of the most important truths that modern philosophy has developed, although its germ and spirit are undoubtedly in the New Testament.

“It is not for me to estimate the value of the service which the *Westminster Review* may have done for free inquiry, but sure I am it has sought to do good service. Unsupported by the aristocracy, by the bookselling influence, by any monopoly or faction whatever, flattering no one, but endeavouring to adopt no unsound opinion of any one,—it has, I think, some claim upon public patronage.

“I am sure, Sir, I shall read your work with much pleasure when it arrives, and with improvement too. Your mind must be one whose outpourings will refresh those who have the privilege of intercourse with you, and I beg to assure you I shall highly value it,” &c. &c.

*To the Author of “Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions.”*

“Bingfield, January 30, 1829.

“Sir,—I have long been desirous of some opportunity of directly testifying my gratitude to a writer, to whom I am not less indebted for instruction and delight than to any other of the present day to whose pages I have had access.

“In perusing your Essay, I have found it difficult to determine whether more to admire the vigour and ingenuity of the thoughts, or the singular beauty and precision of the language in which they are clothed. Sir, in that mighty struggle between light and darkness, which is perhaps peculiarly distinctive of the age in which we live, you have been a contributor of no ordinary power towards that result in the advancement of which the truly great and good of all countries are now so intensely engaged.

“ With such a book as yours to exhilarate and guide them—with such a master genius as Channing in the west, Ram-mohun Roy in the east, and Sismondi, equally persevering and enlightened in a no less interesting sphere for exertion—may I not add, with events so rapidly marching in the land, whose vexations and ferments I am hourly and anxiously witnessing—with so many aids and encouragements, what may we not hope for even in the compass of our own remaining lifetime? May the Giver of every good and perfect gift send forth even but a few such labourers as you to the harvest, and the issue cannot long be doubtful!

“ I have striven to profit not only myself, but my countrymen, by the lessons your valuable pages have afforded; with what effect I presume to submit to your judgment;—Mr. Rowland Hunter having received my directions to forward for the honour of your acceptance a work in which I was tempted to embark during the course of last year, from the peculiar attitude of the parties who engage our attention in this country, and doubtless that of all intelligent and inquiring persons in your own. The work is entitled, ‘Bible Controversy in Ireland: Infallibility not possible, Error not culpable.’

“ At page 179, you will perceive of what use to me your masterly Essay has been. It was to be expected that critics of a certain class would quarrel with the reasoning by which their craft was so likely to be endangered; they did assail it with indeed more of clamour than discussion; but to the little of serious argument which was offered, I had some opportunity of replying, I believe, in the opinion of dispassionate judges, with complete effect. The difficulty which appeared to trouble them most was the apology, as avowed in the *Westminster Review*, which our system involves even for the professor of Atheism. But which of the two systems, that of candid and tolerant discussion, or of fierce, unpitying dogmatism, is the more calculated to beget even that lamentable excess of incredulity, or of credulity rather, few rational minds, I believe, can doubt.

“ I shall be particularly anxious to learn that Mr. Hunter has been punctual, and, if I might venture to trespass so far

upon a pen which, I trust for the interests of mankind, is much more importantly engaged, I would solicit the honour of a very few lines, at his earliest leisure, from an author so peculiarly valued by Sir, yours," &c. &c.

*Answer to the foregoing.*

" May 6th, 1829.

" Sir,—Your gratifying letter of the 30th January was transmitted to me by Mr. Hunter about two months ago, but, by some unaccountable oversight on his part, the copy of your work to which it refers reached me only a few days since. This unfortunate delay has prevented me from doing earlier, what I have great pleasure in now doing—returning you my warmest thanks for your communication and for the acceptable gift which it was intended to accompany.

" In reading 'The Bible Controversy in Ireland,' I have admired the mastery of the subject which it displays, and I have been particularly struck with the clear and vigorous manner in which you put the argument against infallibility.

" Be assured that to have inspired the author of such a work with the favourable sentiments expressed in your letter, is a source of gratification which I would not readily relinquish. It may probably be news to you that I have just brought out another volume of Essays, under the title of 'Essays on Truth, on the Progress of Knowledge, and on the Fundamental Principle of all Evidence and Expectation,' a copy of which I will request Mr. Hunter, when next I write to him, to convey to you, and I hope you will do me the honour of giving it a place in your library. I am not sure that you will agree with the author in all his views, but I have no doubt you will give him credit for integrity of purpose even where you think him mistaken in opinion.

" It would be presumptuous to suppose that anything I might say could influence your pursuits, otherwise I should feel a strong disposition to urge that a pen like yours should not remain idle while there is so much ignorance and prejudice in the world to remove and overcome.

“As Mr. Hunter is apt to procrastinate the transmission of copies, at least I have found it so in more than one instance, it would be well to remind him of the copy of the above-mentioned Essays when you have the opportunity of so doing. With much respect, I am, yours respectfully,

“THE AUTHOR OF THE ESSAYS ON THE FORMATION  
AND PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS.”

*Letter from Dr. J. Armstrong, of Dublin.*

“Dublin, Nov. 1, 1828.

“My dear Sir,—The rumour which produced my hasty notes to you last week came to me in so tangible a form that I gave it almost entire credence. Perhaps my wish for the accession of such a mind as yours to a cause which I have warmly at heart, may have given my credulity a bias, added to my desire to promote, as far as my influence extends, the views of a man for whom I cherish a very cordial friendship. At the same time, I must frankly acknowledge that, after all, I am more pleased to find the report groundless, because, had it been true, you would have been exposed to the suspicion of having suppressed the public manifestation of your sentiments until a profitable situation offered which induced you to declare them. Though you would not have suffered in my estimation, whatever steps you had taken in this affair, such are my high notions of your disinterested pursuit of truth, yet I should have been mortified had the circumstances of the case afforded any apparent foundation for a misconstruction of your motives. I rejoice, therefore, to find that my friend must appear in this affair, as in every other, consistent and above suspicion. Totus teres atque rotundus.

“The gentleman from whom I received my information is Mr. C—— D——, a very distinguished member of the congregation. Immediately on receipt of your letter I wrote to him, and assured him that the rumour is totally unfounded. For this assurance I gave him your own authority, and I begged of him to discountenance the report whenever and wherever it might come in his way.

“ I will reserve till I have the pleasure of seeing you all discussion on the comparative free agency of ministers of Trinitarian and Unitarian congregations. I understand from W—— D—— that you are likely to pay a visit to Dublin before the end of this month. If you will give me an evening of quiet, unreserved conversation, I will enter on this subject with perfect sincerity. It gives me pleasure to learn that you have heard directly from Dr. Channing; he is one of the brilliant lights of the age, and, though shining in the west, his fellow-christians in the east are both illuminated and warmed by his rays. Do you know anything of Dr. Lant Carpenter, of Bristol? Amongst the Unitarian authors he holds a high rank, and a still higher as an amiable, upright and learned man. In a letter I received from him not long ago, he speaks thus of your work : ‘ I am greatly interested in your friend’s Bible Controversy, but I do not anticipate any extensive effect from it till the great question is decided. It can only make its way among men of culture, and such as are disposed to think ; but, in proportion as it does so, must it drive them from their fastnesses, and shew them the utter untenableness of the ground on which they have been accustomed to rest. I shall be very glad to learn from you what effect it has produced, or is likely at present to do. I think it singularly adapted to its object—calm, yet earnest ; very close in its mode of reasoning, yet so animated and perspicuous that no one can think it dry. The arguments are very skilfully as well as ably presented. The value of the book is enhanced by the judicious selection of interesting corroborative statements from the stores of our older Protestant advocates, and from that mine of sound sense, Locke’s works. It is delightful to see how you are all bestirring yourselves ; *onwards* is the motto of Christian truth, and stagnation renders it impossible. It is better, by stirring up the stagnant pool, to evolve the stench of phosphureted hydrogen, than to have no chance of purifying the water from corruption.’ With kind regards to Mrs. Armstrong, believe me, my worthy friend, faithfully yours,

“ J. ARMSTRONG.”

## LETTERS FROM DR. CHANNING TO MR. ARMSTRONG.\*

“ Boston, December 17, 1832.

“ Dear Sir,—I beg your acceptance of a volume of discourses just published by me. If it shall give you in any degree the pleasure which you have found in my previous writings, I shall be satisfied. At least you will receive it as a proof that, though I have not been a punctual correspondent, I retain a deep impression of the very friendly sentiments which your letters have expressed.

“ You led me to suppose that I was to see something from your pen on the subject of the Atonement. My views on this point, which you wished to know, may be gathered in a measure from the accompanying volume; nothing but the state of my health has prevented my writing on it at some length.

“ Your gardener, John Noble, whom you recommended to me, succeeds well in our country. I obtained for him at once a good situation, where he stayed more than a year, and he has been nearly a year in my service. He is very faithful, and I trust will hold fast his integrity.

“ You have taken a deep interest in Reform. May your best hopes be accomplished! Your friend Mr. Ware is in good health, and very useful in his connection with the theological institution at Cambridge.”

“ January 19, 1835.

“ My dear Sir,—I owe you many, many thanks for your long letter, and I hope when you have leisure you will favour me with more. As to the interest you take in my writings, I can only say to you, what I have often said, that the reception they have met with surprises me; I had no expectation of the effect they have produced. I am not on this account less grateful for the good which I trust they are doing, and I have encouragements to labour, without which my life would be less active and happy. I do not wonder that you have discovered inconsistencies in my last volume. When I engaged to publish it, I intended to re-write all the sermons, but I was able to do this only in the case

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\* See *ante*, p. 146.

of the first, and the rest were printed very much as they were delivered, and not one had been composed with care. My views in regard to future punishment were not given very distinctly, as you observe, nor have I inquired into the subject perhaps as thoroughly as I should have done. I have rested in the general conclusion that the Scriptures intend only to give us strong impressions of the moral consequences of the characters we form here, that their language on the subject of the future life has the boldness of the prophetic style, and that we are in danger of error when we attempt to gather from it any precise views of the condition of the wicked. The mercy to be exercised hereafter—if such there be, and we hope there will be—will be revealed in due time, and we can see why the communication of it now would not suit our present condition. Under these convictions, I have not felt that I was called on as a Christian minister to speak of future punishment but in the indefinite manner of which you take notice. My opponents have charged Universalism on me very stoutly, but I have not thought it worth my while to set them right. In regard to the Atonement I have thought much, and hope one day to give my views to the public; the great question is, what is the nature of the connection between the death of Christ and human forgiveness. That orthodoxy has erred on this point may be made plainer, I think, than has yet been done; that a theory so wanting in scriptural proof should have taken so wide and strong a hold on the Christian world is very remarkable. A thorough work on this subject would be the most important contribution which could be made to theology and the greatest benefaction to the church. I cannot promise such a one—would that I could.

“Dr. Worcester is my friend, a venerable old man, imbued with the spirit of Christianity to a wonderful degree; and what gives to his writings singular value is, that they are drawn from the study of the Scriptures with very little knowledge of what others have said or written. Sometimes he thinks that he has lighted on a new truth when he has been anticipated by others. His life is a powerful testimony to the adequacy of his principles to the wants of the soul. He might truly speak of himself, in the

apostle's language, 'as having nothing, yet possessing all things;' aged, infirm and poor, he seems to enjoy perpetual peace, and the richest might envy his lot. I have read Wainewright's book, but I am no convert to the doctrine of expedience or utility; I think it at war with our deepest moral convictions. The doctrine is held by good men and wise ones, but I feel as if to me it would have a blighting influence. This is one of the topics on which I wish to write. The best exposition of it seems to me given in Macintosh's admirable and critical History of Ethical Philosophy; but he rather confirmed me in my opposition. You ask if Stuart's Letters to me ever received an answer? Not a formal one; but Mr. Norton gave an indirect one, which he has lately expanded into a volume, called 'A Statement of Reasons for not believing the Trinity.' Have you ever read it? It is very powerful.

"As to your Church reform, I have hoped less from it because it is so much an external affair. That a separation of Church and State will do great ultimate good I trust; but I see no signs of a philosophical or religious spirit in England, striving for higher views of God or duty. The orthodoxy of a past age, which exposes Christianity to doubt and objection in the present, seems to satisfy the 'religious world;' and under this influence nothing worthy of the name of reform can be expected soon.

"You ask me if it be true, what travellers have reported, that the spirit of liberty and republicanism is dying in this country? I trust not. I do not wonder at the misapprehension of travellers. The most intelligent and respectable portion of our community are in opposition to the administration; and too many of them are in the habit of relieving their discontent, perhaps party spirit, by invectives or sneers at the people and the institutions through or under which such unworthy men are raised to power. To shew you the true state of things, I need only tell you that, since your friend's visit to this country, the party in which he heard anti-liberal feelings have taken the name of 'Whigs,' and are assailing the administration for stretching the executive power and violating the constitution. Travellers make sad mistakes in interpreting our political conversations and



movements. At the same time, it is true that ever since our revolution we have had a number of men who have wanted faith in our free institutions, and have seen in our almost unlimited extension of the elective franchise the germ of convulsions and ruin. When the demagogues succeed in inflaming the ignorant multitude and get office and power, this anti-popular party increases; in better times it declines. It has been built up in a measure by the errors and crimes of the Liberals of Europe. Add to this, that wealth, fashion and cultivated talent are everywhere exclusive and affect superiority, and look down on the multitude with indifference or contempt, and you will have the explanation of our aristocracy. It has no weight, however, in the country; its worst effect is, that it stirs up jealousies in the working classes. The truth is, human nature works among us very much as with you. The aristocratic and levelling principles are contending together, and *will* contend until Christian and nobler views of human nature shall establish the true relation between man and man. The only formidable evil in this country is slavery. We are not indifferent to it, as you think; but every movement in behalf of the slave at the North exasperates the South; and this irritation, joined to the differences of interest and character produced by the different social conditions in these two great divisions of our country, threaten to dissolve our Union,—a calamity greater than you can well conceive. You speak of the Colonization Society; it will have no influence on slavery, and has had no influence, I fear, in spreading just feelings on the subject.”

“ April 14, 1842.”

On this letter Mr. Armstrong has written the following words: “ The last letter I ever got from Dr. Channing, who died Oct. 2, 1842. *Sit anima mea cum illo.*”

“ Dear Sir,—Allow me to introduce to you one of my old and valued friends, James Savage, Esq., a gentleman distinguished by public usefulness and private virtues. He visits your country to learn more of his own, and wishes to see the spots in England from which the most distinguished of our forefathers

and families came. I ask for him your kind offices and any aid you can afford him. He takes a letter to one of the sons of Dr. Carpenter. I wish I could sometimes hear from you. I know not whether I am in your debt or not, but I know what pleasure I receive from your letters."

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LETTERS ON SLAVERY, ADDRESSED TO THE REV. SAMUEL MAY,  
JUN., LEICESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.\*

"11, Clifton Vale, Bristol, July, 8, 1844.

"My dear Sir,—How can I sufficiently thank you for the fidelity and fulness of your delightful communications from America? They are everything I could wish. Your own letters especially, and the intelligence conveyed in the number of the *Christian World*, which gives the history of your anniversary week, and which I have duly received, are beyond all value.

"I must own I am least pleased with the copy of the answer to our anti-slavery 'Address.'† As a sort of *abstract* denunciation of slavery, for which we always gave our American brethren ample credit, it may perhaps read pretty well. But as an answer to *us*, or in any way an echo to our ardent and, I must say, *loving* Address, I regret I cannot say I hold it in any very high account. But others may view it differently. The engrossed copy, with the signatures, of which your letter makes mention, has not yet arrived; at least *I* have heard nothing of it. But the main thing is accomplished. God has been with you, and in so far has blessed the effort He put into our hearts in England to make in behalf of his oppressed people in your land. The 'American Unitarian Association,' impelled by your generous spirit, and strengthened by the enlightened minds which co-operated with you, has taken a great step forward, and has now put on solemn and official record, as a body—representative of the purest of

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\* See *ante*, p. 268.

† Address from ministers of most of the Unitarian chapels in England, Scotland and Ireland, on the duty of the churches in America respecting slavery.

all Christian forms of faith—its protestation against the fell proslavery system in your Western world. May Heaven speed this noble movement, and spare you to see its marked and growing progress to an early triumph!

“I wish you would send to Mr. Keep, of the Oberlin Institute, Ohio, a copy of our ‘Address,’ together with the American brethren’s answer. I learn from him that he has had no intelligence whatever of these affairs, except what our letters have told him. I want your opinion on the present state of the quarrel between the anti-slavery parties in your country. These schisms afflict and dishearten us much. We cannot understand them. How strange, and how much to be deplored, the position of the Deweys and the Gannetts! *Can* the latter be a hater of slavery? and *what* are the movements or means *he* would recommend if he be really such?

“Our papers and periodicals (denominational especially) will inform you of the fearful, but hitherto successful, struggle in which we are engaged for the protection of our religious societies, or rather properties.

“Our Tory Government has certainly done itself honour in placing its shield over us, the weaker party in the Dissenting connection in this country, though, we must say it, the most liberal and the most intelligent.

“I am returning to London this very day to assist in the expected passing through its last stage in the House of Lords of our Dissenters’ Chapels Bill. If anything worth the sending you in relation to this subject shall turn up, I will send you an *Inquirer* with the account of it. I have not yet had your Geneva letter. Write to me whenever you can; and assure yourself of the continued and increased esteem with which you are remembered here by all your friends, and they are many. Ever, dear Sir, most truly yours,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.”

“Clifton Vale, Bristol, March 31, 1845.

“My dear Sir,—With breathless interest,—may I not say disappointment, indignation and horror,—I read but yesterday in

my *Inquirer* the announcement of the Texas decision in your Congress!

"I entreat you to inform me forthwith of what you are doing and thinking in the North in this awful crisis. May the Lord's spirit enlighten, support and animate you and yours, and carry you, his true servants, through this struggle as it becometh men, Christians and free men! It was impossible but that parties in your country should be forced by events at length to take their stand on one or other principle: *coute qui coute*. Now, indeed, is the time for 'come-outerism.' And is not this a good? Thanks for your tracts and newspapers; but my appetite is now so whetted for information, that I must still be greedy of more and more whenever you can send me an interesting paper. I annex on the other side some reflections which immediately forced themselves on my mind on looking at the news, and determined me to give them utterance in the course of a lecture which I was to deliver, and did deliver, in the evening of yesterday.

"My subject was, 'Glory to God, good will,' &c.; and my argument was, that not being *personally* religious, therefore we were not *politically* so; and accordingly that, both publicly and privately, we were responsible to God as hinderers of the spread and influence of Christ's gospel upon earth, &c.

"'The truth is' (I argued), 'these things act together, and with a dire reciprocity, as cause and effect. Our want of religion, our unblest tempers, our unearnest hearts, our unloving spirit, our low morality, find their way into the institutions of the country; while these, again, with a fatal efficacy, find their appropriate sequel in the sickly principles and unreal, unprogressive Christianity which mark our times, deform our character, and render us so gravely responsible, not for ourselves alone, but for the unimparted knowledge, light and liberty,—in other words, the pure and practical energy of the gospel, the saving health of Jesus,—which might otherwise from us have spread, or now be spreading, to the farthest corners of the earth. It is lamentable—but not more lamentable, I fear, than true—that we of this country labour, with some colour of propriety, under the imputation of founding a no small portion of our public policy on

unreal pretences. It is assuredly in the power of an enemy, on the watch for an excuse, when he wants an excuse, for his own wrong-doing, to impeach us of insincerity in our public commercial relations with other states. God says, 'Behold, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?' And oh, with what bleared eye, or what shrinking consciousness, must not this passage be read by many who know, or might know, with what deep application it comes home to themselves! Partial interests are seen and known to infect the legislation of our day. And, protesting as we do, protesting as we ought, against that hideous wrong of man to man which claims in him a property and uses him as the brute, how dire the disclosure that, in the very moment of our doing so, the fact of an unjust, but unavowed, 'protection' comes forth to unmask our morality, and in the face of the world, if not to *belie* (for Englishmen *do* hate slavery), to *vitate* at least our national professions! Could anything better have befallen in that darkest of regions where only now has been consummated the most awful of outrages against the shocked humanity and astounded and abashed Christianity of every nation upon earth? 'Free' America has annexed to herself the revolted province of Mexico, which, having conquered by her own citizens and then proclaimed 'independent,' she is now, with its boundless fertility and its wide-spread dimensions, proceeding to cultivate by new immigrations of human machinery to be expressly raised for its insatiable markets, and as rapidly exhausted and re-supplied by its rapacious owners! Yes, 'Free' America, with Bibles and churches throughout her land, and Liberty and Right in unblushing ostentation at the head of her charter and as household words among her people,—'*Free' America has annexed Texas*; and in evil hour the unsuspected integrity, the high morality of England, has been wanting to give her a right of protest against the enormity, and to invoke the God of the Bible and the spirit of our text as witness against the detestable, the anti-christian wrong! Oh, England, England, let not thy good be evil spoken of! but in everything, not least in commerce, that missionary and pledge of peace among the

nations,—but chiefly in religion, that hope and refuge of the soul of man,—shew forth clean hands, lift up an honest voice, and speak from out a true, a faithful and an earnest heart!”

“I cannot now add more. Mr. James has been poorly for some weeks, which has thrown additional duty on me. Our other friends well. God bless you and guide you! Affectionately ever yours,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.”

“Clifton, Bristol, August 7, 1846.

“My dear Sir,—An opportunity presents itself for communication with you, which I am desirous on several accounts not to let pass away. Not many weeks ago I sent you a letter and copy of a late sermon of mine preached at Taunton, where you will remember to have been,—the bearer of which, Mr. William Metcalf, was desirous of introductions to some American friends. I knew him to be a worthy person, and therefore was glad to comply with his wish, so far as to make him and his circumstances known to you. The bearer of the present letter, and a packet I mean to send by him, will be a person already most favourably known to many in America by repute; being no other than the judicious and able compiler of those two most valuable controversial publications, the ‘Scriptural Illustrations of Unitarianism’ and ‘Concessions of Trinitarians,’—works so able and so known that it may be superfluous to name Mr. John Wilson as the author and compiler of those elaborate collections.

“Mr. Wilson is a printer by profession, and one who understands the science of his art, so to say, as few of his profession do. In short, he is a philosopher as well as a craftsman; but having the misfortune to be a Unitarian also, his prospects of business in this religious England of ours are not of the brightest. Therefore it is he betakes himself to your literary world of Boston, where his reputation as a writer will favourably introduce him to many who may find opportunity of promoting his interests as a printer. I need not express my full and sure belief that in you he will find a friend in need, should occasion arise for the exercise of your means to render him service.

“What extraordinary occurrences in the political, which is so much of our moral, world, have been going on, even since you and I last exchanged letters! That very absurd, but at one time apparently critical and ominous, affair about Oregon. Who could have thought so much wickedness and folly could have been found as to agitate the two hemispheres by means of such a trifle! I really believe the intense absurdity of the thing made the English Cabinet so calm, and even good-natured as it was, in reference to that question. But well may we now rejoice that that question *did* arise. For it shewed the real mind that was in men on both sides the Atlantic. And those lovely exchanges of the *peace* sentiment form an item in the history of our respective countries of which our successors may be proud, and of which we in this generation will enjoy the immediate and unspeakable advantage and blessing.

“Especially, how delightful will be the effect in leaving the moral energies of the two worlds disengaged for the benevolent and mighty labours which invite them in other directions! Peace is the grand desideratum. The voice of Christianity has no chance of being heard amid the din of arms. And therefore whatever makes for national peace must be instrumental and aiding to those efforts whose objects are truth, freedom and mercy. Honour, therefore, and blessing on the spirit that spake in those Peace addresses which have so recently crossed the Atlantic! And not less honour and blessing on the commercial policy (with all its train of analogous measures) which, more than any incident of our age, gives assurance that nations are at length about to unlearn war, and to turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks! Much as that question, too, had before perplexed me, I cannot but now admit to myself that the unrestricted interchange of our respective products,—even with slave countries, Brazil as well as Virginia,—is the true line of policy; the only one which can determine whether God has ordained it to be proved that free labour is really cheaper than slave.

“I know the ‘anti-slavery’ interest here is shocked at this doctrine; that is, its stated professors and friends. Indeed, they

are divided on the question. The Anti-slavery Society in Liverpool has broadly embraced the view I take. But the Gurneys, the Sturges and the Scobles, have not yet screwed their philosophy up to the point, at which I, nevertheless, believe it must ere long arrive. I should like to know your further opinion. Pray give the matter your large and deep thought. The best way to diminish the demand for slave produce,—that is the question. I believe unrestricted trade, with its peace influences, will point that out.

“How delightful and awakening were your proceedings at Boston during your May meetings! Thank you most heartily for the *Christian World* containing the accounts, which I duly received. This junction you have formed with the ‘Christians,’ and its result in the establishment at Meadville, are most cheering indications of a healthful spirit among your people. How very remarkable the contemporaneous, though perfectly independent, movements of a like character in widely remote localities, viz., Germany, England and United States! The Ronge movement seems quite in harmony with those tendencies which, among some portion of the operative classes with us and various sections of the community with you, are separating the people from the old forms of thinking, and rendering them impatient for the substance rather than the shadow of Divine truth. Are not ‘all these things for us’? I confess they carry with them an unspeakable interest for my mind. I cannot discard Christianity, and I cannot embrace an incredible and revolting form of it. Retaining my belief of Christ’s resurrection and of the many wonderful works done by him as proof of his direct commission from the Father, I rejoice in such developments of the mind of our age as seem to ensure the preservation of these simple but sublime convictions, disentangled from the horrid and preposterous conceptions of the Divine nature and dispensations which have for such lengthened time made Christianity a dead letter, or a living joke, to such multitudes of its nominal professors, leaving us the wretched alternative only of an intolerant fanaticism, or a chilling worldlyism.

“Therefore it is that a free but believing theology has such



supreme value and interest in my eyes. I wish no constraint, no penalties, no personal estrangements; but rather, nay quite, the opposite. Only I want full scope for impressing such views of Christianity as shall enable men to worship together God as a Father, who has spoken to them by his Son, and spoken in such a way as He has never spoken by any other, the most privileged or gifted, of his creatures.

“Now Theodore Parker does not do this; and I have fearful apprehensions that, after some mental struggles and hesitations, some distinguished men among ourselves will either travel in the same mystical and visionary path themselves, or influence many of those who are to succeed them so to do. You will see by my Taunton sermon that I am endeavouring to oppose myself to this tendency; but also I trust you will see, by reference to the discourse from pp. 23—26, that I do so, or aim to do so, in no unkind, unloving or presumptuous spirit. To be free, and yet be intellectually as well as morally Christian (and without the former what guarantee have we?—I mean, without satisfactory grounds of belief, how can we be sure of belief at all?),—such is the problem in the spiritual, as the harmony of the centripetal and centrifugal forces is in the physical, world. How beautifully Channing and Henry Ware united them!

“I send you in my parcel a printed paper or two, which will shew you the task which local and metropolitan bigotry has imposed upon me in regard to the important object of free and fair and unexclusive education for the promiscuous masses of our poor. These papers, I think, so distinctly explain themselves that I need not further dwell upon them. Only I believe the result will be in London, as in Bristol, that the bigots and exclusives will in no long time have the worst of it. Our new Ministry promises well; and I anticipate a great advance in the right way in educational as in all other liberal policy. *Deo gratias!*

“I may possibly be tempted, should leisure and the humour unite to induce me, to copy for you a passage in a lecture, not long since delivered by me, on Slavery, which you may think not quite unadapted as an offering from me to the pages of your

forthcoming 'Liberty Bell.' Should I send it you, dispose of it in any way you may think best.

"Now that our English commercial policy might seem to regard slavery with somewhat of a tolerating and even favouring aspect, it will more and more become us to keep alive and strengthen the public sentiment of detestation for that most atrocious of all 'institutions' that ever degraded and infested human society. With God's help, I shall not be wanting.

"I am venturing to trouble you with a commission or two. I am sending with this one or two presentation copies of some of my tracts. Pray will you kindly undertake to place them in the proper hands? Further, I am desirous of trying my *literary fortunes* on a small scale in your locality,—I mean Boston; and with that intent confide to your obliging care, for sale by your theological bookseller, a dozen and a half of the larger, and two dozen of the smaller size of my 'Western Union' sermon, preached last spring. The respective prices and conditions I beg to entrust to your decision and arrangement with the bookseller. Requesting the great favour of an early and a long letter from you to say you have received the parcel safely, and to communicate such thoughts and such intelligence as, coming from you, must always be interesting to your very faithful friend,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

"P.S. It will gratify you and your fellow-spirits, Messrs. J. F. Clarke and Whitman, &c. &c., to know that proceedings are now (this very day, 10th August) in action for the purpose of forming a new Anti-slavery Society, to be called the 'United British and American Slavery Abolition Society.' The promoters are holding meetings to-day in London,—G. Thompson, F. Douglas, H. Wright, Lloyd Garrison, Messrs. Houghton, Webb, Allen, of Dublin, &c. &c.,—the object aimed at being, exclusively, slavery in America. This is excellent in thought. May God's blessing be on it and bring it to glorious effect! Mr. Whitman's Letter is worthy of the 'Protest.' They are 'arcades ambo, par nobile fratrum.' When opportunity offers, present them, I beg of you, the homage of my affectionate respects."

" Clifton, Bristol, Nov. 5, 1849.

" My dear Mr. May,— . . . . I will now advert in few words to your great question, which, amidst all our agitations and harrowing reverses in Europe, still has its place in my thoughts and deepest sympathies.

" Will slavery in the district of Columbia be successfully mooted in your Congress? It would be of infinite moment if we could get the point of the wedge in there. I cannot under-rate the *free-soil* movement. Think what it would be if that movement were defeated. And in proportion to that disaster must be the importance of the opposite result. Besides, accustom men to enlist themselves on the right side, and you train a future agitation for larger and better measures. These appear to me to be at present the two great and leading points of interest in the cause of 'abolition;' and I shall be rejoiced to hear from your sagacious, candid and precise mind, that things are so far in a prosperous train.

" How we were delighted with Mrs. Follen, with whom I quite include her worthy sister—a sister worthy of her—Miss Cabot! Every one felt as if the friendship of a lifetime had grown up on a first interview, and the parting was that of long-attached and deeply-moved hearts. I was not a little surprised, you may be sure, when, on shewing Mrs. F. my correspondence with Dr. Parkman, she informed me that that gentleman was her brother-in-law.

" I am not sure that you will have met Mr. R—— C——. He has seen your cousin, Mr. S. May, of whom he thinks most highly; and this I interpret as a good sign of our English friend. But it is amazing to me how people are wheedled out of their abolition convictions or tendencies by intercourse with your Bostonian circles.

" How much your people of America could have aided us by your moral force in Europe, while the struggle was going on between the heroic Hungarian people and the savage combination under which they were at last compelled to yield! But when any sign is wanting in behalf of the great and good and free, with what effect could it come from a source against which so tremendous

a '*Tu quoque*' could be retorted as that of holding 3,000,000 of men in bitterest chains of bondage! We are shortly expecting the illustrious Kossuth in England, and it will be all the better worth living in when we have such a spirit among us.

"The *Inquirer* is a vastly improved print. Do you ever see it now? Mr. Lalor is an able and right-minded man. Ever, with truest regard from Mrs. Armstrong and myself, believe me to be yours,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

"Clifton Vale, Bristol, Oct. 1st, 1850.

"My dear Mr. May,—How often I have been mentally present with you, mentally conversing with you, during the eventful lapse of time (not many months) since we last held written commune with each other!

"For Europe and for America, for the whole earth therefore, hardly any equal period has existed more fraught with good or evil to the human race. The French denouement, not yet developed,—as Byron said of Wellington, 'Saviour of Europe, not yet saved.' The Russian invasion of magnificent Hungary. The Papal restoration and Church reaction. Just now decrepit Austria, by the revived diet under her influence, decreeing coercion of the constitutional Hessians, and Prussia making no sign. The whole heart of Europe under the fangs of a reactionary despotism; and even British influence and power, however impartial and benignant, within her own domestic bounds set at nought by a scoundrel priesthood in Ireland, in league with Jesuit Rome against the light of knowledge. In short, where, looking to Europe alone, are we to end with the catalogue of apparent ills? And then, turning our view westward also, how the heart bleeds at the thought of the consummated wickedness but just enacted on the soil once imagined to be the only hope and home left for crushed humanity! But how powerless are words; and, from me to you on such an occasion, how superfluous!

"We are both, no doubt, in the same mind, trustful of ultimate good, because we believe that God lives. But with what intermediate trials to the good and sufferings to the wretched,

who but God may know? Proximately we are asking ourselves, What next? Will Northern America endure the dreadful policy of compromise,—the terrific *prudence* of her Websters and her practical statesmen? Or will Europe lie down quiescent, if not contented, in the awful abyss to which events have recently consigned her? My hope, my belief, is, that ideas have struck a root which no despotism can pluck up. And because the struggle, though specifically different, is generically like with you and with us,—but with you more personally and closely,—therefore to you, my friend, and your fellow-workers, be all honour ascribed for the aid you have given, and are giving, in the propagation and diffusion of those sturdy and imperishable ideas. Heaven bless your work, and strengthen and succour the hearts and hands united with yours in carrying it on! We are this day exhibiting the few things as yet contributed to your forthcoming Bazaar. In Bristol the cause does not flag; I trust it never may. But you must be sensible how supremely indebted it is to the intelligence, perseverance and benevolence of a man in the position of Mr. Estlin. I think there is no interest in this world which so absorbs him; and hardly indeed could that interest be so intense if he did not link it, both in its bearing to himself and others, with the higher interests of an eternal world.

“We are all impatient to see that wondrous woman, Mrs. Chapman, with whose society and conversation he and his party were so entranced in Paris. I trust this privilege is in store for us at the time when she will be en route for her native land, which cannot afford to be long deprived of her important presence. Yet a pleasure not at all less will be the return of dear Mrs. Follen, with comparative good health from her continental sojourn. A stronger or a finer mind I cannot imagine. A more loveable spirit I am sure there does not breathe. A strange feeling of love and familiarity sprang up almost with the first interview we had with this excellent woman. I certainly, and my wife and others say the same, never had a like experience in any case. May she and her worthy sister very long be spared to fill up the important space they occupy in the society they so much adorn and so greatly serve! We had

lately the pleasure of a short but interesting visit from the Rev. Dr. Hall, of Rhode Island, on his way to Liverpool, whence he was about to sail for America. We had the satisfaction of hearing from him a very stirring discourse in our Lewin's-Mead pulpit, excellent in thought and composition, and with occasional, though only occasional, manifestations of power in point of delivery. He seems a worthy and most amiable man; but I suppose is too much complicated with the stationary or dubious party in your region to take the highest rank in your estimation. He is an earnest well-wisher and sympathizer; though, like other good (but whom you will not allow to be true) men, he cannot quite accommodate himself to the roughnesses of the more ardent abolitionists. He does not like, nor do I (not being 'whole-hog' disciples of the 'Liberator'), lecturers of that party selecting the hours of public worship on Sundays to draw people together on the subject of their mission. Dr. Hall states this to be the practice in some instances. And I think it is giving offence, without any adequate benefit to justify it. Perhaps you can explain; if so, I shall be obliged by a little farther light. I enclose with this a printed paper which will speak for itself. The London *Examiner*, you see, with all its 'independence,' refused to insert it. Why, he did not say, nor could I ever make out. The editor is Forster, not Fonblanque, as formerly; though the latter (my friend) still writes for that journal, for the most part excellent, and always able. I just recollect how near I was omitting a curious bit of intelligence which Dr. Hall (a great friend of Harriet Martineau, by the by) gave me. It was seemingly a courteous and friendly message to me from poor Dr. Francis Parkman, expressive of his regret at having written to me as he did some years ago; that his sentiments on the subject then at issue between us were very much changed; that he regarded abolitionism in a far more favourable light, and would not *now* express himself as he did then. This I think is honourable to him. God be with you!

Ever yours,

"GEO. ARMSTRONG."

“ Clifton, England, May 5, 1852.

“ My dear Mr. May,—How often my mind is in company with yours, though its written expression so rarely comes into your hands. Your anti-slavery labours, and all connected with them, occupy an increasingly large space in my thoughts and in my heart, although interruptions of health (owing to bronchitic delicacy) and their weakening effect at my time of life deprive me of much of that pleasure I should otherwise have in more active demonstrations of sympathy.

“ Some circumstances have lately tended to deepen my interest in your work. I believe the last time I wrote to you was by the hands of M. Lemmi, the Italian secretary of Kossuth, whom I also introduced to Mrs. Follen in London, for the purpose (in which he largely succeeded) of procuring letters to friends in America, chiefly, if not exclusively, ‘abolitionist.’ It was then trembling in the balance what part the ‘great’ Hungarian would take, or at least how far he would steer from a course which could raise any reasonable doubt as to his sincere and comprehensive attachment to the cause of human liberty. While I write this, indeed, I am reminded that on a later occasion I placed in Mr. Estlin’s hands, to be forwarded to you, the copy of a letter addressed by me to M. Kossuth before he landed in England, and which M. Mazzini informed me he soon after handed to him in London, on their first meeting together. Whether you ever got that copy of my letter to Kossuth, I do not remember to have heard. But I believe I was the first and not the least emphatic of Englishmen, in drawing his attention to the subject of slavery in that country where he was so soon to be received as the emissary and representative of the cloven-down liberty of Europe. The silence upon this subject which he observed toward myself, at least as treated in that letter (for in a personal conversation, in which I broadly enough hinted my thoughts and hopes on it, he was plausible, even to the verge of high promise and encouragement),—this silence, I say, so wofully interpreted by his subsequent career in his progress through the United States, gave rise to more bitter disappointment than I ever before experienced in regard to a public

man, and proportionally strengthened my horror at an institution which could so deprave whatever of greatness, or power, or genius, approached it; and, through the moral deterioration it inflicted upon Kossuth, consummated the triumphs of the older despotisms of Europe in a way which no mere physical victory could ever have done. In this temper, the 'Letter to Kossuth' from the American Anti-slavery Society came under my notice; for which, as also for your Massachusetts Anti-slavery Report, I have to tender my best acknowledgments to your kindness.

"To read that Letter, backed by that Report, was to enhance a thousandfold all I had felt before. And now, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin!'—but words are ineffectual here, and I must needs check my pen.

"It surely cannot be possible that American society can be proof against such an assault. More eagerly than ever I shall hunt through the columns of your faithful and always admirable Anti-slavery *Standard*, for intelligence as to the effect this work must produce, not only in society, but ere long in the bosom of Congress itself.

"You will see by a London *Examiner* which I have sent you, and two extracts which I shall enclose with this, how I have been involved in a correspondence affecting an eminent and worthy man in the ranks of your American abolitionists, Mr. Ellis Gray Loring, on whose incautious allusions to his country I thought it my duty at once and frankly to animadvert. Ah! what pain to us, as well as shame to themselves, is effected by the slave-holding interest in America, when praises in which we should otherwise so exult, and hopes for the world we should otherwise so fondly foster, are forbidden to us by the one dark and cruel fact, that the land where Simms' capture could be achieved, and where William and Ellen Croft dare not tread, is lowest rather than foremost among the great communities of the world!

"There is one thing puzzles me. The name of Mr. Loring in connection with the American Anti-slavery Society, of which he was an officer, has led me to inquire how it is we never see an Annual Report from that body, and I can get no satisfactory answer to this question. In fact, except that it is alluded to



in your Massachusetts Reports, we on this side the Atlantic would know little of its existence. Why does it not speak for itself? And would not much expense be avoided and better service be done, if that central Society, speaking with authority, should condense in a yearly account of the general anti-slavery proceedings, the subordinate, though able and interesting, details of the minor and local Societies of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, &c. ? Perhaps the subject would be worthy of early and serious attention. Pray permit me also to suggest that, in the construction of your Massachusetts Reports, a 'table of contents' at the commencement would materially add to the convenience of the reader,—reference being often needful, but the subject-matter required not easily found under the present form.

"Our friends in Bristol, you see, have started an humble little auxiliary in the cause of the American slave: *The Anti-slavery Advocate*. I have just suggested for its motto an emphatic passage in Uncle Tom's Cabin, annexing to it the full name (one so full of fame and honour) of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Are not the 'free-soilers' taking higher ground than they did,—vowing root-and-branch destruction to slavery in all parts of the Union? I own I see nothing for it but separation of the North. Write when you can with convenience, and ever believe me, with affectionate truth and esteem, yours,

"G. ARMSTRONG.

"P.S. Did you receive from me two *Inquirers*, containing a report of a conversation I had held in my own house with a Rev. Mr. Bigelow, of Boston? I am not sure that I properly complied with the new post-office regulations, but shall soon get better acquainted with them. I much regret that Mr. J. Freeman Clarke (a stanch abolitionist, is he not?) could not make it convenient to favour us with a visit at Bristol. It is such men we long and love to see. Perhaps we may be more fortunate with respect to the Rev. Nathaniel Hall. You are quite aware of the pleasure we are deriving from the lengthened visit of the excellent Miss Pugh, of Philadelphia. But my P.S. is extending into a letter, so I must in all consistency here close. I wish

we were at liberty to write as much as we pleased within the limits of the cheap post-office privilege."

"Durdham Park, Redland, near Bristol,

"September 30, 1854.

"My dear Mr. May,—It may be an indifferent excuse, though somewhat of a curious truth, that the more an absent friend is in one's thoughts and we commune with him in spirit, the less we incline to the outward demonstration of written communication. We somehow take it for granted that we are in his thoughts as he in ours,—thinking pretty much the same things, agitated with the same interests, occupied in the same schemes, and surely, though silently, reposing in the belief of a mutual esteem, regard and affection. But I must refrain from further indulgence in this strain, or I should be proving that my present writing is superfluous, and be establishing an argument why I should not expect you to write me a line in return,—a sort of success in the use of my logic or sentiment of which I must confess I am by no means ambitious. The truth is, I long to hear from you. Such a world of fact, such an accumulation—a sort of Ossa upon Pelion—of horrors, have taken place within the last few terrible months, that if it were only a few words of apostrophe I should like to have them; just as two men in the dark might press each other's hands that each should be assured the other was at his side, sharing in the same dangers and affected with the same impressions.

"Have you recovered your breath yet, since the affair of Burns? *I* scarcely seem to realize it. What must it be with *you*? Yet your manly, hopeful heart can send us 'light even out of that gloom.' And, indeed, so much of a hoper and believer am I too, that the greater the wickedness, the larger the 'sum of the villainy,' the nearer, or clearer at least, the prospect becomes of deliverance and redress. I occasionally imagine that the public feeling in England, and in the sounder portion of Europe, will rise to such a point as to re-act on that of America; and that no educated or decent man in any of the free States will feel himself fit for society, even within the

bounds of his own country, much less in foreign countries, who has not availed himself of every accessible means of denouncing, opposing and destroying the monster evil with which his political 'Union' connects him ; and for which, so long as that odious connection exists, he must be held as morally responsible to God and all mankind. Forcibly I see and ardently admire that portion of your *abolitionary* scheme (to coin a new word) which goes to this point,—the raising of the public feeling, the awakening the public sentiment, against the atrocious thing. Without that noble effort, neither you nor we could ever get on. But it is equally happy, as a corroboration of the moral view, that the *economical* aspect of the 'peculiar institution' can be held up in warning before the bleared eye of those who might be comparatively insensible to the former. One of the latest authorities on this subject, the more important as it is simply statistical and wholly dissociated from anything like sentiment, has been the report of Professor Ansted, whose name does not bring with it any very favourable impressions, judging by former notices of his on the subject of American Slavery addressed to the editor of the *Times*, but who furnishes the materials of an article in that journal (not editorial, but 'literary') of deep interest to the friend of the African race in your land. The article may be found in the *Times* of September 22, and is in these terms: 'Quitting the region of Pittsburgh, &c., we are conducted by Professor Ansted to the State of Virginia, where slavery and its evils oppose a check to the progress of internal improvement so striking to the observer as to shew beyond all doubt the disadvantages of the institution, even in an economical point of view,' &c. Then follows this passage from the work of Professor Ansted: 'Virginia has a delightful climate, an unusual extent of fertile lands, extensive coal-fields, and other mineral stores. It has numerous rich land-owners, large capitalists; but what a contrast it presents in its desolate and forsaken aspect to its neighbouring free States! Had it not been for this fatal legacy, Virginia might have been in the position of New York, and carried much of the trade of Europe in a different channel from that it has now taken upon itself in America.'

"This is encouraging; and how gladly and quickly we seize on everything that bears the same character! In the *Times* of August 30, a communication from 'our own correspondent' at New York is one of the most exhilarating documents I have for a long time met with. How my heart warmed to that genuine spirit, who seems to have sprung up just in the hour we needed him, Mr. Thayer, 'the originator of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company.' I surely have not misplaced my admiration for him, or my delighted hope in the success of the scheme which proposes out of so much evil to bring so much good! Can you furnish me with any further particulars of this seemingly noble undertaking? Do the Garrison people support it?

"Now that Mr. Estlin lives so recluse a life, and his *active* interest in the great cause is so greatly lessened, I seem to be less in contact with your Boston doings, sayings and thinkings, than I used to be in other and better days. I have not the opportunity of talking so much about them, and gathering light and strength as I listened to what fell from him. Your charming letter, which Mary read to some of his selecter friends, myself included, gave rise to many sweet, though melancholy, impressions. How eloquent is truth! How beautiful is love!

"I dare say you can spare now and then a thought to the present crisis in Europe,—a strange one indeed, of whose end or meaning we hardly yet know what to conjecture. Sebastopol has fallen, and the Emperor seems hardly to have a move. But what is to come of it? Is there to be no deliverance except for the Mussulman? Strong friends of liberty seem to think that in the repression and humbling of the Czar is the guarantee of future and no distant good to the disaffected nationalities. The conflict will now be more equal; and, this great interloper out of the way, hope may arise for Italy, Hungary and Poland. It may be so; but I think all the sooner if Austria were to throw off the mask and join his brother autocrats. Of European affairs, this would seem to be the great impression in the mind of Kossuth, whose sagacity in this direction is rarely at fault. Would I could say the same of his thoughts in regard to America! It were a long story to tell of all my intercourse with this

marvellous, but after all mysterious, man. I was the first to give him light, or try to strike fire out of him, on the subject of your 'domestic institution.' He *hung the latter*, but certainly had no lack of the former. His last affair, in writing to your consul in London, Mr. Sanders—'Colonel,' I beg his pardon—and trying to push aside the noble testimony of Mazzini, was pitiful beyond measure; and, in spite of my love for Hungary and hate of Austria, sinks him irrecoverably in my estimation. And yet it is hard to resist the fascination of the man,—a difficulty felt by Mrs. Stowe, notwithstanding her knowledge of his American escapades. 'To disparage *him*,' she says, 'is to despair of human nature.' I enclose with this a little escapade of mine, which you may not happen to have seen, extracted from a late *Inquirer*. Pray send it on to the *Standard*, with my heartiest respects, if you think the editor of that valued journal might care to see it.

"I do not know that I need further tax your time by adding more at present. Any new features of hopeful aspect,—any deep change of tone in your well-to-do, and comfortable, and church-going classes,—any earnest political purposes of action through the votes of the (as yet) *free North*, which, after all, has the issue in its own hands,—anything of this sort which you can communicate, as well as assurances of your own health and domestic happiness, will be a great and sincere pleasure to, dear Sir, ever faithfully yours,

"GEO. ARMSTRONG.

"Send us over, when you can *spare* them, such persons as Miss Pugh and Mr. M'Kim, of Philadelphia—so gentle, yet so strong! Parker Pillsbury, a choice spirit, of whom I have seen much too little.

"You will, perhaps, see some little articles contributed by loving hands in this family to your Boston Bazaar. A little scrap-book of my boy, Dickey; a little painted chess-board by Mrs. A.; and a little patchwork chair-cover, a star pattern, but without the *stripes*,—the offering of our Ladies' Anti-slavery Society.

"P.S. All honour and gratitude to William Lloyd Garrison, whom, I fear, I never thanked for the gift of a delightful volume

of his works which he sent to me, I am ashamed to say how long ago! Do make my acknowledgments to him, and offer him the homage of my best regards and thanks.

“G. A.”

“Durdham Park, near Bristol, England,

“June 3—6, 1856.

“My dear and valued Friend,—I am at length enjoying the combined luxury of a duty and a pleasure in sitting down to write to you. I was this morning reading a pleasant letter from a kind and loving friend of my wife’s, telling her how many letters she had been writing to her *mentally* which she could not command time or strength to commit to any other post-office, and saying how willingly, that is, unrepiningly, she would consider herself answered by letters of the same kind, under the sure conviction that she would send her more substantial epistles did the pressure of this working life of ours give her the leisure and opportunity for doing so. And how many letters have I been writing to you! How often, rather, have I been talking to you,—partaking in your anxieties, sharing in your hopes, your fears, your sorrows and your indignations! Believe me, silent as I have (technically) been, all these experiences and sympathies have been constantly in my mind and heart, as I thought upon the labours and dwelt upon the scenes in the midst of which your noble life is spent, but in which it is not permitted to me to take even the occasional and remote share I formerly did when my health was better and my years were fewer.

“It has so happened that I have seen but little even of Mary Estlin since her father’s death. Her health during the winter, which she spent among distant friends, was far from good; and since her return to Bristol, my own has been but poorly, preventing my taking long walks, and so cutting off that intercourse of neighbourhood which would be gratifying to us both were circumstances more indulgent. She sends me, however, your always interesting letters, and other American intelligence which she knows I would like to see. Strangely enough, one main

item in that intelligence, the report of the Stacy-Hall meeting in Boston, in memory of the *mob* of 1835, I only received last week, as Mary Estlin had quite forgotten to send it to me till now. And all this time has passed without my ever knowing how much I was indebted to your kind remembrance of me, and without my thanking you for the great treat those pages afforded me. Yet with what painful alternations of feeling their perusal is accompanied. At first, I was all-exultant and all-hopeful; when lo, you call upon one, as yet unheard, to deliver his mind, and tell us how he feels and what he thinks,—Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The cup of hope had just been full; and I do not say he has dashed it from my lips, but certainly the contents do not come brimming up so full after listening to him, after comparing the work to be done with the prevalent obstacles, and not least from the inertia around you, as described with a power so intense by him. Well, well, perhaps it is the influence of my growing old age which is chilling the burning hope I once had. But, somehow or other, I do sink as I never used to sink before, at the thought of all the successful villainy of the world,—both your world and ours. America is volcanic ground. The most awful scenes of history I believe are yet, and even soon, to be enacted on that vast theatre. Slavery has no conscience—thirsts for nothing but gold or blood; and the contented, well-to-do, ‘respectable’ and ‘religious’ sections of your community have no adequate power, because no adequate will, to stand between the living and the dead and stay the plague.

“One glorious man,—‘the noblest work of God,’ because ‘an *honest* man,’—Parker Pillsbury, I find has just left our shores to return to his own. Long may his strength be spared to do battle in the cause which owes him so much! I never knew, as a speaker in this cause, so thorough a man; and withal so discriminating, penetrating and judicious. Most men, with his ardour, would see no difficulties, or would be disposed to deride and underrate them. But he (so I understood him) looks for no sudden or early success; and yet he gives himself up body and soul to the struggle, as a necessary sacrifice towards a result, not

indeed to be despaired of, but far away in an unknown future. What is there, in truth, to brighten or accelerate that dim future? Suppose you and I were sitting on some hill-side in the moon, with power to see, as matter of interest and curiosity, what was going on here below,—should we say that a war between England and the United States (*nefandum dictu*) was or was not adapted by the Ruler of our planet for the redressing of the stupendous disorders and wickednesses of your western hemisphere? Would it give a chance to the blacks? Would Cuba and the West India islands fall into the lap of the cow-hide republic? And would Canada in the north be wistfully looked to by the enemies of the slave power as a restorative of the balance, giving hope of future power to cope with the southern monster? But, alas, alas! why talk on thus, when here in Europe we have our hollow and enforced ‘peace’ skimming over the unhealed sores of our Hungary, our Poland, and our Italy!

“I have lately been delighted by some effusions of your young pastor at Washington, the Rev. M. D. Conway, who did me the honour of forwarding to me the *National Era*, with his sermon of January 26th, 1856, and also the pamphlet form of same. He seems a man of the right metal and the true ring, and I should like to know something more of him. With a *leetle* less of the Emersonian style and more of nature in his mode of expression, he would, I imagine, be an ally of rare value. If you ever communicate with him, I could wish him to know how much I prized his honest speaking, and how much I hope from his unflinching courage.

“But you are more likely to communicate with my ever-to-be-valued friends, Mrs. Follen, Miss Cabot, Mrs. Chapman and Miss Weston; Miss Pugh, too, and Mr. M’Kim, of Philadelphia. Of these probably you may have more frequent opportunity of knowing something. How my heart warms when I think of them all! And with your Mays, your Jacksons, your Philipses, your Fosters and your Garrisons, who can despair of the precious cause the Almighty has deposited in their keeping? Surely these ‘righteous’ and these glorious few will be yet able to leaven and subdue the corrupt and hideous mass in the



midst of which it has pleased that Almighty for a season to place them.

“What a picture of the future that magic artist, Theodore Parker, has drawn, which I have just been reading in the *Anti-slavery Standard* of May 24th! And what a problem for solution is in the hands of the living generation of Americans! O God! what a mystery is this being of ours! What a thing past finding out is this human heart we bear within us! Well, I think I know your heart, dear friend; and I think, too, you may ‘guess’ at some portion of mine: more than guessing, however, that I am yours in all truth and love, for Liberty’s cause,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG.”

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LETTERS REFERRING TO BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY.\*

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of Ducie.*

“Clifton, Bristol, November, 1843.

“My Lord,—I beg to claim your courtesy in an appeal which recent circumstances compel me to offer to your Lordship’s notice. The subject-matter, though of deep importance, may be shortly stated.

“On the evening of Wednesday, November 1st, your Lordship presided over a meeting, assembled by public notice, for the purpose of promoting education among the labouring classes of this city and its vicinity. Antecedently to this public and larger meeting, it appears from the local prints that certain preparatory discussions were held, with the view of determining on what principles it should be proposed to carry into effect the contemplated object. It further appears that the principles resolved on were those of the British and Foreign School Society; in pursuance of which proceedings, a resolution embracing those principles was presented to the meeting of the 1st November, and by that meeting adopted without a dissentient voice.

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\* See *ante*, p. 272.

“ Now in a paper before me—a printed paper—furnished by the present Secretary to the British and Foreign School Society, I find it stated that ‘ the object of the British and Foreign School Society is the scriptural education of the children of the poor.’ And further, that, consistently with this object, ‘ the principles of the Society are in every respect unsectarian. The introduction of the sacred Scriptures without note or comment, as the only book of religious instruction, appearing most likely to unite the greatest possible number, that practice has been from the first a fundamental rule in all the schools of the Society.’

“ Now, my Lord, it was upon those principles, and especially after the successful struggle against the injurious and illiberal measure of the Government from which we had just come out, that I, as a Unitarian minister of the gospel connected with a large and wealthy society of that denomination in this city, was desirous to see so good a work about to supersede that evil measure, and, with many of my friends, would have rejoiced to render it such aid as our previously and long-established institutions conducted on a similar plan should, with justice to them, enable us to contribute.

“ Knowing and feeling thus, your Lordship will easily understand the surprise with which I perceived that a body of Protestant Dissenters in this city, though comparatively few in number, yet so honourably known for its efforts in the cause of popular education, was wholly disregarded in every arrangement connected with the meeting of the 1st November,—no previous invitation or information conveyed to them, and not a single individual connected with their society named upon the committee then appointed.

“ The conclusion which immediately forced itself upon my mind, and I doubt not on those of many others besides, was that it was *intended* that Unitarians should have nothing to do with the matter. In such a proceeding I could not but feel that your Lordship was placed in a position which you had not contemplated; and that, coming to our meeting as the equal and impartial friend of religious liberty for all, to you, as to every right-thinking man in the meeting, and very many such were there,

the spectacle must have been humiliating,—that the professedly ‘unsectarian’ supporters of the plan, so lauded for its large and catholic spirit, should, after all, commence their work by destroying the basis on which it stood, by infringing the very principle on which, with the active assistance of Unitarians, their successful opposition to the Government measure had been founded; and only in the persuasion of whose upright and consistent profession of the principles by which they proposed to be guided, can it for a moment be supposed that your Lordship’s high name and presence could have been placed at the disposal of the parties who invoked them to their aid on the occasion referred to.

“If I am right in my conclusion, your Lordship, I doubt not, will have the kindness to assure me that I have not misinterpreted the intentions and sentiments which I have thus attributed to you; and that, in consenting to take the chair at a meeting convened for the purpose of scriptural and unsectarian education for all, your object was the extension of that benefit in its unimpaired simplicity and integrity, and the impartial protection of all who should be called on to maintain and defend it. Simply and in fine, my Lord, my purpose in this communication is this—to learn from your Lordship whether the exclusion, *if intended*, of the Unitarian denomination of Protestant Dissenters, the proved friends of the unsectarian education of the people and willing supporters of the fundamental principles of the British and Foreign School Society, from all participation in the measures connected with the meeting of the 1st November, was or was not a proceeding of which your Lordship could deliberately approve, and which, had you been duly apprized of it, you could have consented to recommend to the acceptance of an intelligent, Protestant, and liberal assemblage of the citizens of Bristol?

“With the greatest respect, awaiting the favour of your Lordship’s reply, I have the honour to be, your very faithful and obedient servant,

“GEORGE ARMSTRONG,

“Formerly incumbent of Bangor, in the diocese of Down, and now minister of the Lewin’s-Mead congregation of Protestant Dissenters in the city of Bristol.”

*To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell.*

“ May 11, 1846.

“ My Lord,—With the greatest respect I entreat the favour of your Lordship’s attention to the enclosed printed paper, which sets forth a faithful account of certain proceedings connected with the cause of education to the poor in the city of Bristol. I do so at this particular period because I perceive that the annual meeting of the supporters and friends of the ‘ British and Foreign School Society’ is announced for Wednesday next, the 13th of May, and that your Lordship is on that occasion to occupy the chair. The paper I enclose will sufficiently prove to your Lordship that a disposition exists, and has been acted on in this city, to narrow the sphere of religious comprehension in the great work of popular education ; and that unless the parent Society, and its enlightened and liberal supporters in the metropolis, shall signify their marked disapproval and disavowal of such proceedings, the character of that great institution must proportionately suffer in the estimation of all just and liberal men throughout the kingdom.

“ It will be seen, my Lord, that in a very important branch institution, ‘ auxiliary’ to the British and Foreign School Society, as it has been uniformly designated in its Reports, the principle is now avowed of non-co-operation with *Unitarians*, on the ground of ‘ important differences of (religious) sentiment.’ I apprehend that the Unitarians of the metropolis, and generally throughout the country, have never been prepared for the promulgation of such a principle ; for assuredly, if they had, neither their influence nor pecuniary support would have been so early, so zealously and so liberally afforded in the promotion of the principles of the British and Foreign School Society.

“ Under these circumstances, as a friend of unsectarian education, as one anxious to arrest the ignorance and elevate the condition of the masses of the people in this country, as rightfully claiming to be *done by* as he would himself do, I beg leave to place myself under your Lordship’s protection ; and on behalf of a large society of Unitarian Christians in the city of Bristol,

ever the munificent and untiring friends of education for the poor and 'education for all,' to solicit from your Lordship, on the part of the British and Foreign School Society, at its approaching meeting, some suitable notice of the grievance to which I have thus taken the liberty of inviting your Lordship's earnest and immediate attention.

"I am, my Lord, respectfully your Lordship's obedient servant,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG, A.B., T.C.D. (Clerk)."

*To the Right Honourable T. B. Macaulay.*

"11, Clifton Vale, Bristol, June, 1846.

"Sir,—Having lately had a conversation with you on the subject of the British and Foreign School Society, I beg leave to invite your attention to some documents connected with that subject which I take the liberty of enclosing with this.

"I have the less reluctance in thus troubling you, because I apprehend, as a Member of the Legislature, you adopt the current idea that, though especially the representative of one locality, you are constitutionally invested with the attributes of a general representative, and would maintain your right to be regarded as holding relation with the whole constituency of the country. Assuming this to be so, I may be pardoned for requesting your attention, and, as a Member of the Commons' House of Parliament, to some extent your protection too, in circumstances which present themselves to my judgment and my feeling as constituting a grievance of no slight amount.

"A few facts will explain the case better than any multiplication of words from me. I am in a condition to prove that the British and Foreign School Society was founded upon the principle of admission to its schools of '*the children of parents of all religious denominations*,' subject merely to the rule that '*the Scriptures should be read therein*, but that no catechism or peculiar religious tenets should be taught; every child to be enjoined to attend regularly the place of worship to which its parents belonged;'—the clauses marked with inverted commas being quoted in fact from the 4th of the fundamental Rules and

Regulations of the British and Foreign School Society. In the Report of that institution for 1836, the only one I happen to have by me, on the last page are to be found emphatic expressions of confidence in its principles, 'founded as they are in immutable justice, and recognizing as they do, the rights of conscience and the claims of God,—the only legitimate basis of national and universal education.'

"In 1811, an Address, with the names of the Duke of Bedford and Lord Somerville as Presidents, in explanation and recommendation of the Royal Lancasterian system, which afterwards took the name of the British and Foreign School Society, states that, 'In order to extend the benefits of this plan of education to all the religious denominations of the community, it is an inviolable law to teach nothing but what is the standard of belief to all Christians, the *Scriptures themselves*. The children are trained to read the Bible, but are left entirely to the explanations and commentaries which their parents and friends may think it their duty to give them at home.'

"In 1812, at the annual meeting, Duke of Sussex in the chair, among the persons appointed to move resolutions were the following Unitarians: Lord Carrington, Rev. Dr. Crombie, Mr. William Smith, M.P., and Alderman Wood.

"In 1815, after the Society had taken its new name, an appeal for increased pecuniary effort having been *personally made to Unitarians* in common with others, large sums were in consequence subscribed by members of that body; among whom the following were a few: Rev. Dr. Lindsay, £150; Mr. Strutt, of Derby, £100; Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, £100; the Messrs. Wedgwood, £100; Mr. Richard Taylor, £50, &c. And in the first Report on the invested subscriptions thus raised, the following distinct enunciation of the principles on which they were called for was issued, with the name (among others) appended of Mr. D. Ricardo, at that time a member of the Unitarian congregation at Hackney: 'The British and Foreign system of education has fully proved itself competent to its important task. By teaching from the Holy Scriptures in the Authorized Version, it inculcates the grand principles of the Christian reli-

gion and the sublimest morality, while it offers a point of union for Christians of all denominations, and, by not admitting of any peculiar catechism, it excludes none from the blessings of education; so that schools upon this plan may be emphatically called *schools for all*.'

"I should hope it must now be abundantly apparent on what principles and upon what pledges the British and Foreign School Society was founded and supported. And were it necessary to fortify these facts, the corroborative testimony of affiliated Societies, especially that at Bristol with which I am conversant, would leave assurance, if it were possible, still more sure.

"I may, however, venture to trouble you with some important additional matter, set forth in a paper annexed, containing extracts from an examination before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1834, where the answers of the Society's functionaries concur (some of them with sufficient reluctance) in establishing the same facts.

"And now, Sir, to speak in few words of myself. As a liberal educator, as one who took an active and anxious part in the struggle (eventually so successful) to maintain the national system of education in Ireland, and especially as a member and minister of the Unitarian body in this country (although formerly a beneficed minister of the Irish branch of the Church of England), I humbly submit I have established grounds on which I should have reason to complain in the event of any manifest departure from, or threatened danger to, the principles of diffusive and uninterpretational religious instruction which have long and uniformly been laid down as the 'inviolable' law of the British and Foreign School Society, and as the claim it has preferred to the public and to Parliament for the sanction and support it has found at their hands. That departure and that danger have manifested themselves on more than one occasion. Mr. Dunn, the Secretary, has not slightly exposed himself to this charge. His vacillations, indeed, are remarkable. And it is time that some authoritative means were taken for ascertaining the precise position in which he stands, and the

principles on which he professes to act. I must own, however, I have been even more pained by the mistakes (as I would willingly suppose them) into which that respectable Prelate, the Bishop of Norwich, has fallen with respect to the principles of the British and Foreign School Society. Not for the first time, at its late anniversary, has the Bishop alarmed some of the best friends of national education in this country by his misrecollection of the constitution of the system which he has from time to time been called on to support. But to limit my complaint to the most recent example of this hallucination, I respectfully maintain that his Lordship was in error, and inflicted deep pain and gave grounds for just alarm, by the character of his remarks at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign School Society, held at Exeter Hall on the 11th May.\* As a member of a denomination unequivocally recognized by the law of this land as a Christian body, as a believer in divine revelation through Jesus Christ (and what divine, what lettered man in the community, can be uninformed of the imperishable aids which have been brought to this cause from Unitarian sources?), I might have just ground of offence, that any man should speak as the Bishop spoke of 'Jews, Infidels and Unitarians,' as if these last were as little Christian as either of the classes with which he thought proper to associate them. But as an educator as well as a Christian, as a taxed member of this free state as well as in my connection with a religious society, I have ground not only of offence, but of formal and strong complaint, when a Bishop, in open contravention of the historical, declared and well-known principles of the British and Foreign School Society, in annual meeting, and in presence of its official authorities, promulges that *doctrines* are taught in its schools, which no Unitarian could suffer his child to imbibe, and which, if inculcated, would deny to him the privilege of embracing the advantages and the blessings of the free, open, comprehensive and purely scriptural education which its Rules and muniments unequivocally proffer to him. It may be said that Unitarians have

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\* Reported in the *Times* of May 12th.



no reasonable ground of complaint, being so *few* in number compared with surrounding religious denominations; I must confess this mode of reasoning does not satisfy me. Circumstances cannot revoke a pledge, cannot reverse a principle, cannot palliate an injustice. If, in a general measure passed for the liberty of commerce, out of the whole of the empire the city of Edinburgh were to be excepted and told it had nothing to complain of because, after all, it was only a single locality, I apprehend its discontent would be very unmistakeably manifested. Justice, surely, is not to be meted or mutilated after such fashion as this. The Unitarians do not wish to be mulcted or stigmatized; they do not deserve it; and they respectfully hope and believe that the House of Commons, in dispensing its grants for education, will see that they are not the only Christian body in this country in whom, because they are few, the principles of freedom may be wounded, or the claims of justice be struck down.

"I have the honour to remain, Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG, A.B."

*To Thomas Clarkson, Esq.*

"11, Clifton Vale, Bristol, September 11, 1846.

"My dear Sir,—I have heard with pain of your increasing infirmities and of your recent illness. Very far, therefore, am I from venturing to intrude upon you under such circumstances with any design of giving you trouble,—at least, any trouble of writing.

"If you are well enough, I would beg to submit for your inspection the short statement or declaration I herewith transmit. To this declaration there are about half-a-dozen names I should greatly wish to be appended, your own among the number. I am preparing to send it for the same purpose to the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Brougham, and some three or four more of the surviving *original* subscribers and supporters of the Royal Lancasterian and British School system. It will be most important aid to me in substantiating *my* view, which I believe

is the right and true view, of the design of that great and liberal institution, against the narrow and exclusive view which Mr. Henry Dunn is actively endeavouring to impose upon the credence of the country.

"I trust, dear Sir, I do not ask you to do what you can have any hesitation to acquiesce in. It is a simple matter of fact, to which I am desirous to have the important testimony of your respected name ; the insertion of which at the foot of the paper I send will be sufficient answer to this.

"I have the honour to remain, most respectfully, dear Sir, yours ever,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG, B.A."

*To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M.P.*

"11, Clifton Vale, Bristol, February 22, 1847.

"Sir,—I have taken the liberty, for which I fully anticipate your pardon, of directing a printed tract to be placed in your hands, having for its subject the long-continued mis-administration of the 'British and Foreign School Society.'

"It would ill become me to apologize to a statesman who has so distinguished himself for the protection of the weak against the strong, of the few against the many,—as the truthful page of history and the grateful hearts of many living will record of you,—for soliciting your earnest and best attention towards another instance in which a wrong has long been in course of perpetration against the unpopular denomination of which (though formerly a beneficed clergyman of the Established Church) I am now a member and a minister.

"The evidence of this wrong is comprised in the pages of which I respectfully request your acceptance and perusal. Should I be found to fail in establishing that evidence, I have nothing to seek or ask beyond the desire to be pardoned for giving you even the few moments trouble its consideration may cause to you. But should I be so fortunate as to carry the conviction to your mind that the British and Foreign School Society has, in the hands of its existing functionaries, become an instrument of annoyance and exclusion towards 'the sect everywhere spoken against,'

although comprising in its ranks the honoured names of a Milton and a Locke, a Lardner and a Channing, then shall I venture to hope that, when opportunity in Parliament or otherwise shall occur, your influential voice will not be wanting on the side where justice, tolerance and liberality shall call for its expression.

“ With the greatest respect, and no slight feelings of gratitude, I have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir, your very obedient and faithful servant,

“ GEORGE ARMSTRONG (Clerk).”

*To His Grace the Duke of Argyle.*

“ Durdham Park, Redland, near Bristol,

May 3, 1855.

“ My Lord Duke,—I beg leave to address you under the following circumstances :

“ I find it announced that your Grace is to preside at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign School Society, to be held on Tuesday, May 8th; and I therefore very earnestly desire to place in your Grace’s hands some short but important documents with which I think you ought to be acquainted. These I had already addressed to Lord John Russell, believing that he might have occupied the chair which your Grace is to fill.

“ The documents, I apprehend, will sufficiently explain themselves, and will spare me the necessity of troubling you with any further remark respecting them, than that they may perhaps be more conveniently read in the order they are marked, Nos. 1 and 2; and that vouchers for the facts referred to are abundantly furnished in the ‘ Case’ and ‘ Further Case’ submitted for the opinions of Sir John Jervis and Mr. Rolt, also enclosed herewith, and which I would very respectfully press upon your Grace’s attention.

“ I greatly wish I might be regarded as addressing you simply as a friend of national education on the broad and liberal basis (religious, but not dogmatic) originally promulged and still professed as the essence and peculiar merit of the British and Foreign School Society. But since it falls to my lot to write

also as an individual denominationally injured by the long-continued violation of its Rules on the part of the authorities of the Society, I feel assured that that circumstance will not prejudice my appeal in your Grace's mind, albeit, most probably, theologically trained so very differently from my own. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just,' is an apostolic combination which will not be overlooked by any religious mind, wheresoever or howsoever trained.

"Mr. Dunn may seek to screen himself and his Committee under the shadow of great names. But I have little doubt it will be felt they pay but an ill compliment to the rank they would flatter, if they hope by its means to escape the reprehension their bigotry and injustice so richly deserve.

"With great respect, I have the honour to be your Grace's most obedient servant,

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG, B.A. (Clerk)."

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#### LETTER ON THE BALLOT.\*

*To the Non-electors of England.†*

"Durdham Park, Bristol, June 4, 1857.

"Countrymen,—We sympathize with and honour your desire to share in that suffrage which alone can constitute the essential distinction between the Englishman and the serf of Russia or the slave of Kentucky. We might argue this right for you on the principles of human nature; but we are content to rest it on the fundamental concessions to be found in the text-books of the writers on the British law, if, indeed, these principles and fundamental concessions are not bound together in a moral and logical sequence which cannot be broken.

"Man has a right to himself, to his body, to his labour, to his volition, to his self-direction and self-government. Each holds this right in such a way as to be consistent with the equal right of every other person. This is the common sense as well as the

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\* See *ante*, p. 264.

† From the *Bristol Advertiser* of Saturday, June 20th, 1857.

common right of mankind. All must feel and acknowledge, though all have not, from circumstance and position, equally declared it. We have a signal evidence of it in the preamble to the American Declaration of Independence. That celebrated document says:—‘ These truths are self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.’ So much for the American theory of the civil rights of men. Now for the British. What says Blackstone, the celebrated commentator on the laws of England? ‘ As to the qualification of the electors—the true reason of requiring any qualification, with regard to property, in voters, is to exclude such persons as are in so mean a situation that they are esteemed to have no will of their own. If these persons had votes, they would be tempted to dispose of them under some undue influence or other. This would give a great, an artful or a wealthy man a larger share in elections than is consistent with general liberty. If it were probable that any man would give his vote freely and without influence of any kind (meaning of course undue influence), then upon the true theory and genuine principles of liberty, every member of the community, however poor, should have a vote in electing those delegates to whose charge is committed the disposal of his property, his liberty and his life.’ Upon the showing, then, of an authority high in repute among the Conservative classes of this country—if authority could be necessary in the case—the humblest man in your ranks is as much entitled to a vote for his representative in Parliament as the nobleman to his castle or the Sovereign to his throne.

“ Pursue, then, this legitimate object of ambition, but pursue it with the conditions that will make it effective. Be wise in your generation, and stumble not into the snare which your enemies would lay for you. They would amuse you by the pretence that, while you are unfit for the franchise yourselves—of which they are notoriously unwilling that you should be

possessed—you are competent to watch and control the exercise of that right by others. They pretend that those others are *trustees for you*. Can they deceive themselves by this fallacy? Can they hope to deceive you? To be a trustee is to be responsible in some moral or legal sense. Morally responsible a man unquestionably is for every duty he discharges or omits. But suppose that the exercise of the electoral vote is under the protection of secrecy, in what way would that species of responsibility be diminished? Must not secrecy ensure rather than endanger its proper action upon the conscience? Let the disturbing element of threatened ejectment from a tenement, let the apprehension of violence to a voter's person or loss of his property be withdrawn, will the voter be less fitted for the office of self-communion, or of fidelity to the just expectations of his neighbours and his country?

“ Thus far in respect to the moral responsibility of the electoral act. But as to any other responsibility, in what can it intelligibly consist? Responsibility implies penalty. But what penalty can you inflict on the man who votes according to his own views, and not yours? A representative in Parliament is liable to be dismissed at the hustings. But there is no power, no law, to dismiss the voter. The cases are not parallel. There is a trust in the former office; none at all, in the same sense, in the latter. The law knows this; the ruling classes know it; and it is full time that the people, especially the non-electoral portion of them, should know it too. The consequence of not knowing, or not reflecting on it, is, that you are put upon a false scent, and induced to run full cry in pursuit of shams. Those who profit by your mistakes flatter you with the idea that you are fit judges of the present electors, instead of helping you to be electors yourselves, and they connive at the disreputable and tyrannical agencies of which you are the instruments or the victims. Either you are yourselves bribed or intimidated, and thus you become the tools of political aspirants, who in return despise and malign you, or else, in pursuance of some momentary passion of your own, you tumultuously interpose (as at Kidderminster, at the last election) to prevent or punish the exercise

by those whom you are instructed to call your trustees of that suffrage which it would be your true wisdom and your only political safety, to demand in its integrity for yourselves. Let me remind you of the well-known reply of a Member of the Legislature in a former era to his corrupt constituency: 'I bought you, and (with an oath) I'll sell you!' And who may not blush for the character of the present day when, with all our machinery of legislation, with all our great reforms and our little reforms, with all our tinkering of the constitution for the last twenty-five years, we have sixty petitions at this moment seeking to make void elections on the ground of bribery and intimidation!

"Think on this, and then say whether you can deny the conclusion of an observant and experienced man. Mr. John Bright, late M.P. for Manchester, in a letter contained in the *Times*, affirms that 'to give a large increase of votes, without the security of the ballot, will subject increased numbers of our countrymen to the degrading influence which wealth and power now exercise so unscrupulously upon the existing electoral body.' If you cannot reasonably deny this conclusion, beware then, and examine narrowly the measures of reform about to be offered to you by the Government. Be not deceived by counterfeits; claim the franchise, but claim it with the conditions incident to all other rights, according to the analogy of our law—the way to exercise it *safely* and without *let or hindrance*. The governing classes in England are not deficient in courage, and they have always discipline and science in their favour; but there is no resisting reason. If we may not frighten, let us endeavour to shame them. There never was an age when peaceful effort had so good a chance. There is great wickedness and great tyranny even among civilized races; but there is great and ever-growing knowledge. We know what is going on in the world. We know the contest which is everywhere beginning to develop itself, in professedly free communities, between constrained and unmolested, that is, *real* voting. We know that the *pro-slavery squatters* of Kansas have legislated *against the ballot*; and, thank God, we know, too, the triumphant struggles which are in progress among the most vigorous and thriving of our British

colonies in behalf of that indispensable safeguard of the liberties they have derived from their beloved native land. Go, then, and do ye likewise. Be no longer content to be non-electors, waging an ineffective and tyrannical scrutiny over the votes of your brethren, but demand to be free voters yourselves. Everywhere, and promptly, petition in favour of Mr. Berkeley's forthcoming motion, and insist on that protection from the *great*, the *artful* and the *wealthy*, and even from yourselves, which can alone be effected by the institution of secret voting, or, in one simple but potent word, the adoption of the BALLOT.

"GEORGE ARMSTRONG."

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EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO A STUDENT AT CAMBRIDGE.

"November 30, 1847.

"My dear H.,—I am glad you do not doubt my desire to assist you at all times and by every means in my power in your investigations into a subject too little studied with the disinterested love of truth which I rejoice to see so deeply occupies your mind and, I may truly say, your heart. I do not think I need add more, except to recommend most strongly to your perusal Dr. Priestley's History of the Corruptions of Christianity. It is a work of rare merit, from its being not only so lucid but so temperate ; some of its citations are occasionally hasty, but his opponents have been utterly unable to shake his substantial correctness, or fairly impeach the soundness of his conclusions ; Horsley tried, but with small success. I would further, and perhaps as your very best resource, impress upon you the gratification and instruction you will derive from the perusal of a most able compendium, a *multum in parvo*, of the ecclesiastical history of this question in Mr. Thom's lecture in the Liverpool Controversy of 1839.

"You ask for a solution of your doubts as to the limitation of worship to one Supreme Being. Briefly I may say all that need be said on this, to me, plainest of all subjects. Happily, if authority is to decide the point, we have it at hand. Where ?



In Luke xi. 1, 2. Our Lord was requested to instruct his followers how to pray. To whom did he instruct them to offer their prayer? May not the answer from this fountain authority satisfy your question as well as theirs? Again, John xvi. 23. Is not that passage explicit enough? 'In that day, when I am exalted,'—whom were they *not* to put their request to? and to whom were they? You ask me, dear H——, to answer this question; why should I presume to do so? Another has given this answer, and to whom else should we go in a matter thus abundantly made plain? Compare this passage with Matt. vii. 11. Finally, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Eph. v. 20, Phil. iv. 6, 7, and Col. iii. 17. These few Scripture references seem to me sufficient not only to disperse to the uttermost any doubts as to the proper and exclusive Object of prayer, but in effect to decide the whole Trinitarian controversy. Worship of any other kind, or to any other being after such explicit instructions and commands, must be will-worship—worship of man's own device which naturally leads to everything superstitious and anti-christian. By some, the Mediator is prayed to to intercede with the Father; by others—and why not?—the saints are prayed to intercede with the Son; no, not with the Son,—this would be taking too great a liberty with him,—therefore prayer must be made to the Virgin to intercede with the Son to intercede with the Father to do that for us which the Son himself tells us the Father is ready to do on our own suitable asking of it: Matt. vii. 11. Such is the consequence of departing from the simplicity of Scripture and the truth as it is plainly told us from the lips of Jesus."

" April 26, 1849.

" Pray have you seen the last *Examiner*? What an awful account it gives of the perversion of Oxford minds in the two opposite extremes of Romanism and Atheism. For in truth the Nemesis of poor Froude would seem to use her lash in driving him to that last sad, darkest border of soul-engulfing doubt. But who can wonder at such thoughts growing out of the reaction necessitated by the hideous theories of the Newmans and the Marriotts. Happy surely the Unitarian intellect which

enjoys the blessing of a creed probable enough to satisfy the logical demands of truth, and practical enough to sustain and guide a faithful heart in its struggles with the trials and discipline of life. We can be absolutely certain of nothing not capable of mathematical demonstration, or not impressed by the continuous report of the concurrent senses; moral truths can only rest on probability, through its various degrees of reasonable assurance; and far and high up in that scale is seated our glorious Unitarian faith. Keep it, dear H——, as the apple of your eye, the very kernel of your spiritual life; and help, as you grow and gather strength in knowledge, influence and position, to place it in that aspect before the world in which it has a right to be, and in which it would be if its professing believers did their part as they ought."

"October 26, 1850.

"Have you been hearing from or of poor Cruikshank? \* I have. He wrote to me from Rome a curious and characteristic letter, recapitulating his former farragos, but adding that he had strong hope of *your* and *my* conversion to the true Church, as he often made mention of us both, praying for that result in his devotions to the Virgin, of whose favour, especially when solicited at *Rome*, arguing from past experience, he could not doubt! How are you feeling inclined? Has the process of conversion yet commenced in *you*? I am afraid I can give no encouraging ground to hope for myself, poor fellow. I replied to him in a long letter—to little purpose, alas! except to amuse you, should you wish to see the correspondence. In that case, say so; I will commit it to the custody of the post on some early day for safe delivery to you. Seriously, dear H——, are not these marvellous days in which we live? Who would have imagined such results from the writings of a few hair-brained tracts at Oxford ten or a dozen years ago? I am half diverted and wholly enraged at the recent announcements from the Quirinal; only think, a Popish Archbishop of Westminster, a Bishop of Liverpool, and a Bishop of Clifton! Well, they have dandled

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\* A convert from the Church of England, now the Rev. Dr. Cruikshank, Vice-principal of the Collegio Pio at Rome.

their idol so long,—they have given such harbour to bigotry, intolerance and nauseating nonsense in the bosom of their own dear State Church at home,—that the poor English noodles have absolutely nothing to the purpose to say. The Jesuit has kept within the *letter of the law*, and the Protestant of the Church of England may just sit down and eat his supper with what appetite he may.

“What a time it is for Unitarianism if it knew how to profit by its opportunity; but alas! the religious, or irreligious, stirring of men’s minds in these latter days has visited our borders with no less strange manifestations, though of a different character, than we have witnessed elsewhere. An affected liberalism would throw down all barriers, and, in the aim of embracing all, has ended in grasping nothing; it resigns or derides its creed, and the seekers of the age are prone to understand that Unitarians have nothing to offer them, and go to other folds to knock for admission. Yet I trust we have some true spirits among us who understand our position, our interests and our duties,—men not to be driven from post to pillar by the eloquent effusions of Mr. Fox, or the more earnest and captivating mysticism of Mr. Newman.

“By the by, how curiously conflicting is the form of infidelity as respectively developed by these two minds. Mr. Fox, I verily believe the less holy of the two, holds to the doctrine of immortality as a truth of instinct, or something near it. Mr. Newman scarcely cares to hope for it, and at best regards it as an ‘aspiration.’ Mr. Fox, however inconsistently with his theory of gospel origination and history, maintains the character of Christ and the morality of the system he founded as surpassingly grand and pure;—Mr. Newman can see nothing particularly to command respect in one or the other, and thinks Fletcher of Madely a purer being than the Son of Mary!—a melancholy but instructive lesson, to be guarded how we yield ourselves to the fascinations of writers, however earnest and pure themselves, who would, on such self-confuting principles, endanger the peace, holiness and happiness of multitudes, both just beginning to think, and wholly untrained in the perilous field of theological speculation.

" My dear H——, I devoutly trust in the stability of your mental character. You are not untrained; you are used to think; you have sometimes confided in me. I wish I was better able to advise and help; but whenever you think I could afford you, be it ever so little aid, from my larger experience and my longer thinking, pray address yourself to your unworthy but always truly affectionate friend,

" G. A."

*To the same, after he had left Cambridge.*

" July 23, 1855.

" I know how jealous is the spirit of worldly occupation, and how little the desk of the office might seem to have in common with the closet of the student or the tribune of the orator; and I the more rejoice when I see how well some one can make the charms and excitements of the latter consist with the severities of the former, proving how sacred a triad may subsist in the harmonious blending of religion, literature and commerce. This really seems to be the spirit of your people in the north. From my heart I wish we had more of it here; but our trouble always is and has been to get our richer people to take a more personal interest in our affairs. They will give their money when a very plausible case is made out for them, but on our platforms they are rarely found. I speak more particularly of Bristol, and I might say much the same thing of London; and the consequence is, that out of Liverpool or Manchester we are naturally enough exposed to the sneer, or at least that absence of respect and consideration, implied in the joke of Sydney Smith, who said to a lady in Clifton, ' Well, you Unitarians are certainly a most intelligent, most worthy set of people, only you are so frightfully *ungenteel*!' Now by keeping together and coming out, the ' genteel people' would gather courage, and possibly attract other gentility also, and at all events take that sarcasm out of the mouth of the enemy. Your affectionate friend,

" G. A."





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